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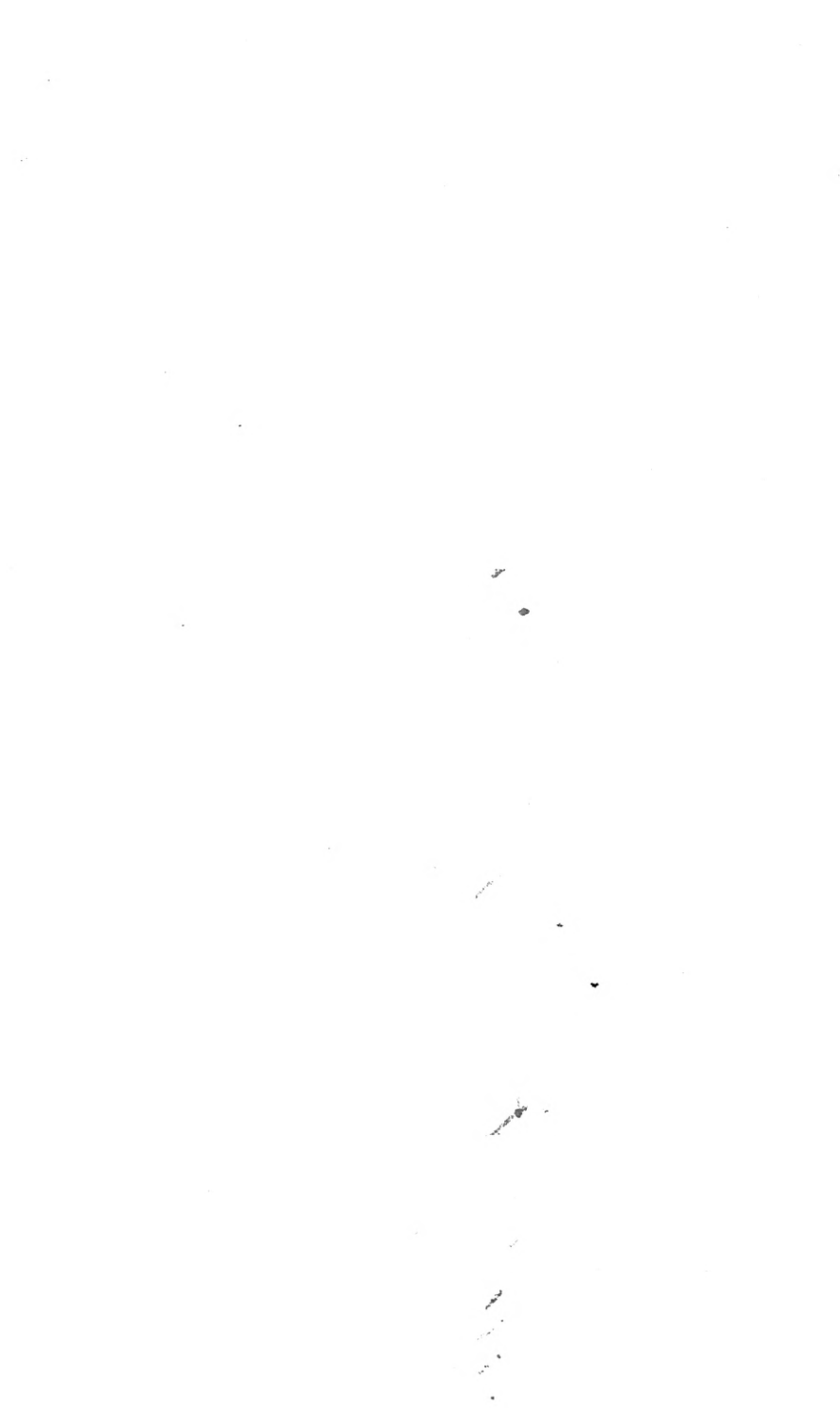












THE
BIBLE DEFENDED

AGAINST THE
OBJECTIONS OF INFIDELITY:

BEING AN EXAMINATION OF
SCIENTIFIC, HISTORICAL, CHRONOLOGICAL
AND OTHER
SCRIPTURE DIFFICULTIES.

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PREFACE.

IN the preparation of this little volume, we have endeavored to bear in mind the wants of Sabbath School Teachers and Scholars, who, in their scriptural studies, occasionally meet with "some things hard to be understood," upon which they desire a ready and convenient means of information. As well have we endeavored to remember the wants of the private Christian who, in his daily reading of the Bible, meets with difficulties, or, in his intercourse with his fellows, hears objections made thereto, for the solution of which he has neither the time nor means for research. Nor have we forgotten the honest, yet doubting inquirer after truth, (and we believe there are many such,) to whom the seeming discrepancies of the Bible have been made a temptation to unbelief. We trust he may here find, in some measure, an antidote to his skepticism.

There is no attempt here to exhibit (except in an incidental manner) the evidences of the authenticity of Scripture; our special object has been to refute infidel objections to the Bible, arising from the nature of its contents.

In this task, we have availed ourselves of the best sources of information, on the subjects treated of, within our reach; and in the statement of matters of fact, have depended upon the most reliable authorities. Many of the objections have been drawn from original sources, and, in some instances, are given in the language of infidel writers. In the Introduction a number of objections are examined which could not well be classed under texts, but which, nevertheless, claimed some notice in a work of this character.

The order of the texts has been followed through the book, but a copious topical index is added, which will be found useful in referring to the subjects discussed.

Our performance bears ample internal evidence that we are unskilled in book-making, yet, conscious as we are of its imperfections, we send it forth, trusting that it will be, as "seed-corn cast upon the waters," borne to some genial soil, and productive of much good.

INTRODUCTION.

POSITION OF INFIDELITY.

CHRISTIANITY is so suited to our moral condition, so perfectly adapted to the wants and demands of our nature, that it is accepted, and its practical advantages realized, not so often from patient examinations of its voluminous and conclusive evidences, as from the felt need of that which it professes to give. It appeals to a conscious want. And men rarely investigate the evidences of its authenticity until they feel this want. Infidelity is too often assumed to subdue this inward craving for a higher good than earth can give, and to smother the uprising conviction that Christianity is of God. For this reason it has proved, and must ever prove, a failure. It is at war with the moral exigencies of our nature, and can never hope for success.

In their attack upon the Bible, infidels have imposed upon themselves an equally hopeless task. It devolves upon them to prove the *whole* Bible historically untrue, or, if they admit the truth of some portions of it and deny that of others, they must

give us clear and well-defined rules or principles to discriminate between the true and the false, and hold themselves willing to accept the legitimate consequences of such principles. To receive some portions, and reject others at will and without rule, as is too often done, is manifestly unjust and dishonorable.* But the historical truth of the Old and New Testaments is sustained by many infidel writers, from Celsus to Gibbon, by accredited profane history, by the rules of evidence which prevail in our courts of justice, and upon which we give credence to any historical record. Its historical truth being established, its inspiration and divine authority are easily proved. We laugh to scorn then the wicked hopes and malignant assaults of infidelity. The star of our holy religion is still in the ascendant. "Persecuted, but not forsaken—cast down, but not destroyed"—"the Rose of Sharon" still blooms, the lovelier for the storms that have shaken it, and shall lift up its head in perennial beauty and deathless fragrance, when the pillars of the universe totter, and "the mountains are moved out of their places."

* "This book, evidently composed by different hands, has yet its materials so interwoven, and its parts so reciprocally dependent, that it is impossible to separate them—to set some aside, and say: 'We accept these, and reject those:' just as, in certain textures, no sooner do we begin to take out a particular thread, than we find it is inextricably entangled with others, and those again with others; so that there immediately takes place a prodigious gathering at that point, and if we persevere, a *rent*; but the obstinate part at which we tug will not come away alone."—*Eclipse of Faith*, p. 396.

THE SOURCES OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF SCRIPTURE.

IN order to form a just estimate of the character of Scripture difficulties, it will be necessary to investigate the principal sources from which they derive their origin.

I. The Bible, containing an account of God's character, his dealing with men, &c., may naturally be expected to include many things beyond our understanding, and to discourse of many subjects, both novel and mysterious. Difficulties of this kind, arising from the nature of its contents, prove, rather than disprove, its superhuman origin, and are, at least, presumptive evidence of its truth.

II. The greater part of these writings was composed to serve a present purpose, and unless we enter into that purpose, and are prepared to follow the argument of the writer, we must, of course, to some extent, fail to comprehend his meaning; therefore, the lack of proper preparatory knowledge on our part may prove a source of difficulties.

III. These books are of extreme antiquity, and often refer to persons, places, opinions, prejudices, &c., many of which are forgotten, but which must be recalled if we would fully understand the reference.

IV. The different sources from which the sacred writers drew their narratives, the different names applied to the same persons and places, the different persons and places bearing the same name, and other circumstances of like nature, are sources of difficulty to those who do not make themselves acquainted with them.

V. These books have not come to us as they were written. Their original languages are not generally understood, and we read them under all the disadvantages of a translation. The translation may be imperfect, or its expressions may have become obsolete, and, in some instances, the learned translators may have mistaken the sense of the original. The difficulties which arise thus, though serious, are not insuperable, but may be overcome by careful and patient research.

VI. The omission of incidents in one narrative of events, which are supplied in another narrative of the same occurrences—a *diminution of record*, if we may so term it—is a source of difficulty, and especially in the Gospels. In such cases, all the facts given by the several writers should be taken together, in order to form a complete historical view of the events recorded.

To one or other of the above-named sources may most of the difficulties of Scripture be referred. They are almost exclusively of an historical character, not affecting, in the remotest degree, the doctrines upon the knowledge and practice of which the salvation of the soul depends. These essential doctrines are exhibited in the plainest and most intelligible manner, and among their several branches there subsists the most perfect harmony. Therefore, the unlettered Christian need have no fear when infidels parade these difficulties before him with malignant ostentation.

It may be asked—Why has God permitted these

difficulties to accumulate in his written word? We can answer this only by asking—Why has he not embodied himself in the letter of the record? Why has he chosen such a medium at all? Why have not the heavens everywhere blazed with the record of his will in characters of fire, clear to every eye, and plain to every mind?

The various difficulties of the Bible may be classified, in reference to their character, under the following heads:—

I. Difficulties arising from obscure or incorrect translation.

II. Difficulties that may be obviated by comparative reference.

III. Texts which have been willfully perverted by gainsayers.

IV. Difficulties that may be cleared by reference to natural causes, obsolete customs, ceremonies, &c.

V. Chronological and topographical difficulties.

VI. Difficulties in the application and understanding of names.

VII. Difficulties arising from derangement of chapters and verses in some of the books.

As these are severally considered in the order in which they occur in the Bible, we shall not now stop to notice them further. But the above view of their character and the resources of their origin may tend, perhaps, to dissipate the fears or prejudices we may have entertained respecting them.

THE NECESSITY OF A REVELATION.

INFIDELS reject the Bible because it is unnecessary; nature, they say, teaches all of God and of morals man has need to know. How this can be proved, or what is its value, if true, is hard to discover. Admitting that some measure of religious truth can be deduced from the course of nature, this would neither prove the Bible untrue nor unnecessary; it might even then serve well as a guide to religious knowledge. The objection, therefore, has no force. If, however, we prove there is a necessity for a revelation* from God, it will be a presumption that such a revelation has been made. Denying then the sufficiency of the light of nature, we shall proceed to show that the exigencies of man's moral condition call for a revelation from God.

I. *Man is a religious being.* We mean by this that he has been created with religious instincts. In every phase of his existence, from the lowest barbarism to the highest degree of civilization, he worships something and constantly manifests an instinctive longing for immortality. This truth is so obvious that it needs no proof. If he instituted these various forms of worship without Divine direction, it was certainly in obedience to the conscious

* Perhaps it would be better to use the term *direct revelation*, for, if God has in any degree exhibited his character and will in the course of nature, he has made a revelation—since *to reveal*, is *to exhibit*, or *make known*, in any way. Hence, when infidels say that God's laws may be learned from nature, they concede, not only the necessity, but the fact of a revelation. The question *then* will be—Is a direct revelation of God to man necessary?

necessities of his nature and proves the existence of his religious instincts.*

II. *Nothing within man or without him, short of a revelation, can satisfy the demands of this instinct.* It is here that infidels join issue with Christianity. The necessity of some degree of religious sentiment is conceded, but the necessity of the Bible is denied. The old English infidel writers claimed that the mind could discover all necessary religious truth from its own resources, without supernatural aid. But this is not so. Take the fact of God's existence—how can man in his original state, as he spontaneously grew up, or was created, discover this fact? The very idea of God is foreign to him, and how is it to be communicated to his mind? Can he deduce it from the existence of natural things? He has first to form an abstract idea of spiritual existence; but everything he sees or feels is material, how then is this idea to be formed? But the ability to reason on such subjects supposes an educated mind, education supposes civilization, civilization supposes religion, and religion supposes some knowledge of God. That condition in which man originally was, according to the theory of infidelity, precludes all reasoning on such abstract points. He was a mere animal and incapable of reasoning outside the sphere of his physical necessities. If he is educated it must

* The existence among all nations of professed revelations of God's will and character, is evidence of the necessity of a revelation. If these sacred books were the inventions of men, they were invented because they were felt to be needed.

be in civilized society, but we know of no civilization without a religious basis. Thus we reach the conclusion, that a revelation was necessary at the very beginning of man's history.

"Would a single individual, or even a single pair of the human race, or indeed several pairs of such beings as we are, if dropped from the hands of their Maker, in the most genial soil and climate of this globe, without a single idea or notion engraved on their minds, ever think of instituting such an inquiry; or, short and simple as the process of investigation is, would they be able to conduct it, should it somehow occur to them? No man who has paid due attention to the means by which all our ideas of external objects are introduced into our minds through the medium of the senses; or to the still more refined process by which, *reflecting* on what passes within our minds, when we combine or analyze these ideas, we acquire the rudiments of all our knowledge of intellectual objects, will pretend that they would."*

"Between matter and spirit, things visible and invisible, time and eternity, beings finite and beings infinite, objects of sense and objects of faith, the connection is not perceptible to human observation. Though we push our researches, therefore, to the extreme point, whither the light of nature can carry us, they will in the end be abruptly terminated, and we must stop short at an immeasurable distance between the creature and the Creator."†

* Glieg's Stackhouse Intro.

† Van Mildert's Discourses.

Again—"Suppose a person, whose powers of argumentation are improved to the utmost pitch of human capacity, but who has received no idea of God by any revelation, whether from tradition, Scripture, or inspiration, how is he to convince himself that God *is*, and from whence is he to learn *what* God is? That of which he yet knows nothing, cannot be a subject of his thought, his reasonings, or his conversation. He can neither affirm nor deny till he know what is to be affirmed or denied. From whence then is our philosopher to divine, in the first instance, his idea of the infinite Being, concerning the reality of whose existence he is, in the second place, to decide?"*

If it is said, this idea of God is instinctive in man, we ask, how came it to be so? It could not create itself in the mind, and if God created it there, then he has revealed himself to man, and revelation is not only a necessity, but a fact.

It is sometimes argued that conscience is continually suggesting to man a divine and overruling presence—a superhuman something to which he is amenable, and which is God.

But conscience supposes the communication of God's will, as a standard of right and wrong, as much as it supposes the *existence* of God. And we very much doubt whether the existence of a conscience will serve the purpose of the deist who, rejecting the authority of a direct revelation, depends solely upon his own reason.

* Hare's Preser. against Socin.

To this argument, from the evidence of conscience, we may well apply the reasoning of Faber on the evidence of design. "The argument, from *the evident design impressed upon the universe*, proves, indeed, that the universe must have been first designed and then created; but it is incapable of proving, that the universe had no more than a *single* designer. Whether we suppose one designer or many designers, and thence one creator or many creators, the phenomenon of *evident design in the creation* will be equally accounted for: and, beyond this, the argument in question, as managed upon deistical principles, neither does nor can reach. The deist, I allow, can prove very satisfactorily, and without the aid of revelation, that the universe, marked as it is in all its parts by evident design, must have been itself designed, and therefore created; but he never did, and he never can prove, without the aid of revelation, that the universe was designed by a *single* designer."* So, conscience does not say whether it is one God or many to whom man is amenable. Further, the infidel, by admitting the existence of conscience and its intimations of accountability, concedes the adaptation of man's moral constitution to a direct revelation, and by denying such a revelation involves himself in an inextricable dilemma.

But waiving all these difficulties, and supposing the fact of God's existence is known, how are we to

* Difficulties of Infidelity. See. II.

learn of his nature, our obligations to him, and our future destiny?

Where does nature unfold those perfect and sublime lessons on the attributes of God, of which infidels boast? Where does it tell us that he is a God of infinite power, on whose almighty arm we may fling the burden of our cares, and stay our hopes of immortality? Nowhere. Do you say his power is everywhere manifest? True; but it is an infinite power. How can we prove, from nature, that he has not done the utmost he can do? That he made everything that is made does not prove that his power is without limit, or that the limit has not been already reached; that we can conceive of no higher exercise of power than is evidenced in the creation of the universe is nothing to the point, for there may be exercises of power beyond our conception, and even these exercises may fall below infinitude.

Where does nature teach that God's wisdom is infinite? The nice adaptation of means to ends, the wonderful harmony of nature's operations, are not adequate proof that he who made and moves the universe is infinitely wise. Where is the evidence that he "readeth the hearts and discerneth the thoughts of men," that he sees "the end from the beginning," and provides for the evil afar off? Where is the proof?

Where does nature teach us that God is love? Where does it so unfold the goodness and mercy of God as to melt the heart and win back to rectitude

the wandering prodigal? "Nature teaches," says the infidel, "that God is benevolent." *Benevolent?* Benevolent in providing for the necessities of his creatures; necessities which, upon the theory of infidelity, he himself created? So this is the benevolence which is to exact from us the highest and holiest forms of religious reverence? which rates us with the beasts and birds, and minutest animalculæ of microscopical notice?—for what is man above these, when measured by that care which is bestowed upon each and all alike? If the infidel's notions of divine benevolence depended upon what he learned of it from the course of nature, they would be meagre indeed.

But how is he to reconcile with this benevolence, the withering drought, the crushing tempest, the blasting pestilence? He goes into a scene of life and gayety, and in the very midst of festivity, some sudden, fatal casualty crushes hearts just now beating and bounding with bliss. He looks upon some calm, peaceful landscape, smiling with beauty, and suddenly clouds and darkness sweep over it, and the mad, howling tempest desolates the scene. He goes into his family, circles himself with loved ones, and in the midst of domestic bliss, death enters—stills the prattle of his darling—rends the finest feelings of his heart—crushes the soul of her whose joy is the sunlight of his home—and he starts up tempted to think that some infernal devil disputes with God the government of this world. And how will nature solve these difficulties? Without the Bible

they are inexplicable mysteries, and life itself is one dark problem to which there can be no solution. So imperfect are the teachings of nature on these first principles of religion.

Rom. i., 20, has been supposed to teach that the nature of God may be learned from his works. But God originally revealed himself to man, consequently, it was not difficult to deduce something of his nature from "the things that are made," and develop afresh the knowledge of God from the contemplation of his works and providence. And the Apostle restricts this knowledge of God to his higher nature in general—"the dominion of a mighty power over the elements of the world"—but not including his personal existence as an absolute spirit, his justice, holiness, and love.*

And where is man to learn a perfect rule of life? Must he follow the dictates of his own heart? Then lust will be his monitor and passion his guide. Shall he appeal to the nations of antiquity? Among these their captives, slaves and children were murdered with impunity, and thousands

"Butchered to make a Roman holiday."

Lying, theft, adultery and crimes of foulest dye, were frequently, constantly practised; their altars were often stained with human blood, and their temples polluted with shocking obscenities.

Is he, turning from these, to follow the precepts of philosophers and legislators of antiquity? What

* See Olshausen on the passage.

authority have these to teach him? By what right do they demand his obedience? Clearly they are without authority. But whom of them is he to listen to? Zeno and Diogenes sanctioned many impurities; Lycurgus and Solon legalized infanticide; Draco punished all crimes with blood; Plato advocated a community of wives; Aristotle was bitter and revengeful; the Catos cruel and immoral. And modern infidel philosophers are not much above these in morality. One of these tells us that "physical good is the rule of virtue, and physical evil the rule of vice." But such rules are both deficient and impracticable. There are virtues which do not result in physical good; there are vices not attended with physical evil; there is physical good which does not arise from virtue. The lightning rod on my house results in physical good, but it was not necessarily virtue that put it there; and so of a thousand other occurrences in life. An infidel work now before me says, "that course which on the whole tends to produce the greatest amount of physical good is a virtuous course." But how is a man to determine what course will produce the greatest amount of physical good? He can not depend upon the testimony of others; for, on the supposition that a revelation exists many would decide on that basis,—on the supposition of no revelation, opinions would still be conflicting, therefore every man must decide for himself, and when by his long experience he might make some sort of determination, it would

be useless; habits would be fixed and death at hand.* Therefore, without the Bible there is no sufficient rule of life.

And where is man to learn his future destiny? If he appeals to ancient philosophers, one tells him his soul is material, another that it will be transmitted through beasts and birds, another that it will be absorbed into the Deity. All is darkness and confusion. He asks—is my soul immortal—if so, what shall be its doom or destiny? Cicero doubts—Cæsar denies—Seneca wavers.

Here nature fails—the material can not reveal the mysteries of the spiritual. This world speaks for itself alone, it can not speak for another. Here I stand upon the crumbling brink of time; every moment some portion of my resting place drops into the deep abyss, and threatens next to plunge me into its unfathomable depths. Clouds and darkness thicken around me. From what part of nature shall come the beam to illumine the future? Where has she hidden the Promethean fire which may light me through the valley of death? Everything within and without impels me forward—good God! into what?

* “All reasoning on morals presupposes a distinction between inclinations and duties, affections and rules. The former prompt; the latter prescribe. The former supply motives to action; the latter regulate and control it. Hence it is evident, if virtue have any just claim to authority, it must be under the latter of these notions; that is, under the character of a law.”—*Hall on Modern Infidelity*.

But deductions and inferences from the course of nature cannot have the force of moral laws.

Here Infidelity fails me, Philosophy fails me, Reason fails me, and, but for the Bible, there would remain nothing but to leap, with the hopeless desperation of a suicide, into the profound gloom and perish forever. Thank God, then, for the Bible. In this all the dark problems of life are solved, and man is made wise unto salvation. Here I find offered to my hopes a destiny beyond the reach and ravage of time, and outstripping the sublimest conceptions of man; here is the beam that will light up the regions of death, and fling the bloom and beauty of immortality around my ascending path to the thrones and crowns of heaven.

MYSTERIES OF THE BIBLE.

INFIDELS often object to the Bible that it contains mysteries. Yet the nature that they would deify is full of mysteries. There are more to be found in any one department of science than is contained in the whole Bible. But the term mystery is only another name for our ignorance; that which we do not comprehend we call mysterious. To the pupil, there are mysteries in mathematics which are very clear to the teacher. So by properly studying the Bible, and becoming imbued with its spirit, much that is now incomprehensible will be made plain and satisfactory.

But there are matters connected with God, and the "things invisible and eternal," which must ever remain mysterious to the human mind, at least in its present condition. Apart from this, however,

the Bible makes plain, even to the understanding of a wayfaring man, enough "for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

THE IMMORALITY OF THE BIBLE.

It is sometimes asserted that portions of the Bible are very indelicate, and even immoral. An infidel lecturer lately said, it is the most immoral book *he* ever read. This charge comes with very bad grace from those whose philosophy undermines the whole superstructure of virtue and morality, and gives lust and passion the empire of the world. If the morality of Infidelity is to be judged of by the character of its celebrated leaders, Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Paine, and others, or from the manifest tendencies of the socialistic theories of Owen and the French Communists, then it behooves infidels to hang their heads with shame and confusion.

The Bible simply records facts relating to human conduct; if these are indelicate, the charge is to be laid against human nature, and not against the record. Moreover, there are terms and expressions in our English version which have to modern ears a tone of indelicacy; but this was not formerly the case, and it is to be attributed to the changes which are constantly occurring in our habits and language.*

Although the Bible exhibits the wickedness of

* A Turk would think it highly indelicate, and even immoral, for a female to appear in the streets without a veil.

man, it never justifies, but always condemns it, at the same time, it presents us such precepts and principles as constitute the purest and only authoritative system of morality known to man.

TESTIMONY.

AN infidel of this country recently said:—"The Bible depends for acceptance upon testimony, but testimony is not to be received. Christians themselves do not believe in testimony, only as suits their caprice. Chinese, Hindoos, Persians, and other nations, have their sacred books sustained by testimony, but Christians reject them. Mormons claim to have testimony for their books, Romanists have testimony for their traditions, Protestant sects summon testimony to the support of their peculiarities, but the testimony of each is received or rejected by the others, only as suits their whims or peculiar views."

This is very dishonest. But admitting the reasoning, it does not follow that the Bible is *untrue*, excluding, by the conditions of the argument, all infidel testimony against it, the whole matter is reduced to this—Every man must determine the question of the Bible's authenticity for himself, and not depend upon the testimony of others. Let infidels take this position (the only one consistent with the above argument), and press home upon every man the necessity of settling the question for himself, and there will be no doubt of their sincerity

or consistency, and but little complaint of their zeal.

But the argument is fallacious. It does not discriminate between true and false testimony. The character of the testimony must determine whether it is to be received or rejected. The testimony adduced in support of the Bible must be weighed upon its own merits, and if found wanting we shall not complain of its rejection. But such sweeping, wholesale, indiscriminate repudiation as infidels too often deal against the Sacred Books, betokens a spirit contemptibly illiberal.

The remarks of Butler, on the historical evidence of miracles, acknowledged to be fabulous, suit our purpose at this point. "But suppose," he says, "there were even *the like* historical evidence for these, to what there is for those alleged in proof of Christianity, which yet is in no wise allowed, but suppose this; the consequence would not be, that the evidence of the latter is not to be admitted. Nor is there a man in the world, who, in common cases, would conclude thus. For what would such a conclusion really amount to but this, that evidence, confuted by contrary evidence, or in any way overbalanced, destroys the credibility of other evidence, neither confuted, nor overbalanced? To argue, that because there is, if there were, like evidence from testimony, for miracles acknowledged false, as for those in attestation of Christianity, therefore the evidence in the latter case is not to be credited; this is the same as to argue, that if two men of

equally good reputation had given evidence in different cases no way connected, and one of them had been convicted of perjury, this confuted the testimony of the other." *

We repeat it, therefore, that the truth of Christianity must be decided upon its own evidences, and not in view of the truth or falsity of other systems of religion.

ANONYMOUS BOOKS.

"ANONYMOUS, and therefore without authority," reiterates Paine, with unblushing effrontery. Admitting that some of the books of the Bible are anonymous, they certainly had authors, and if true when the authors were known, they are equally true now. If the writer of a true history becomes in the lapse of time unknown, the history does not thereby become false. If its authenticity be proved, it matters nothing how much doubt rests upon its origin. If Paine did not know this he was sadly ignorant; if he knew and would not acknowledge it, he was shamefully dishonest.

There are issuing from the press constantly, Almanacs, Registers, Reviews, Magazines, &c., which are anonymous, but many of them strictly authentic, and to be confidently depended upon for the matters of fact they contain.

The origin of the Canonical books, as far as ascertained, is as follows. The first five—the Pentateuch—were written by Moses. The book of

* Butler's Analogy, Part II. Chap. VII.

Joshua, by Joshua. Judges and Ruth are attributed to Samuel by most Biblical scholars. The two books of Samuel, the two Kings, and the two Chronicles, bear evidence of being compiled, in part, from the national records; the first twenty-four chapters of 1st Samuel, are said, by Talmudical writers, to be the work of that prophet, the remainder were compiled by Gad and Nathan. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are attributed to the persons whose names they bear. The writer of Esther is now unknown. The book of Job was written either by himself, or by Moses, most probably by the latter from original sources. The Psalms are mainly from David, the remainder are from Ezra, Moses, and others. Proverbs, up to the thirtieth chapter, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles are by Solomon. The several books of the Prophets, by those whose names are attached to them. The Gospels were written severally by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; Luke wrote also the Acts of the Apostles. The Epistles to Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus and Philemon, are beyond doubt Pauline; the authorship of the Epistle to Hebrews is not definitely settled, but it is generally attributed to Paul. James the Less, the son of Alphaeus, is believed to be the author of the Epistle of James. Peter is the author of the two bearing his name; and the brother of James the Less, sometimes called Judas and Thaddeus, wrote the Epistle of Jude. Revelations were written by

John. Respecting the Canon, the historical evidence is very clear and conclusive.

From Josephus, Philo, Melito and the Talmud, we learn that the Jewish Canon agrees precisely with our Old Testament Scriptures, exclusive of the Apocrypha. The Canon of the New Testament was fixed, as now received, at an early age of the Christian church. In the third century we have two complete catalogues of our sacred books, besides a distinct recognition of them in quotations and references by Cyprian, Victorinus, Origen, and nearly forty others.

In the second century we have references and quotations in the writings of Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, and besides, the old Syriac and Italic versions, which fix the genuineness of the New Testament Scriptures up to that period. There have come down to us from the first century, Epistles of Polycarp, Ignatius and Clemens Romanus, which contain formal quotations from, or distinct allusions to most of the New Testament books; sufficient proof that they were held to be genuine by the contemporaries and immediate successors of the Apostles.*

Independent of this and other external proof, there is such internal evidence of the genuineness of the several canonical books as to place their claims, in this respect, beyond all reasonable doubt.

* Carpenter, Horne, Lardner.

VARIOUS READINGS.

AMONG the old copies of the sacred books, passages are sometimes found to read differently in different MSS. When it is difficult to determine which is the true reading, they are called *various readings*. "Infidels have endeavored to shake the faith of less informed Christians, by raising objections against the number of various readings. The unlettered Christian, however, need not be under any apprehension that they will diminish the certainty of his faith. Of all the many thousand various readings that have been discovered, none have been found that affect our faith, or destroy a single moral precept of the Gospel. They are mostly of a minute and trifling nature: and by far the greatest number make no alteration *whatever in the sense*."*

OMISSIONS.

IN describing certain events, it has happened that some of the writers have omitted facts which are noticed by others; as in the Gospels, Matthew has related occurrences which are passed over in silence by the other Evangelists, and they, on the other hand, have recorded facts which he omits. These omissions have been treated by infidel writers as contradictions. But nothing could be more absurd, not to say dishonest, than such a course. That such differences should exist is perfectly natural. The disciples were not always together, and if they had been would not have seen with one pair of eyes; nor

* Horne.

would the different circumstances in the same event have been equally impressed upon all their minds. There must, then, of necessity, be some such differences in their several narratives as we now find in them. The same remarks are applicable in some degree to others of the sacred writers. But let it be borne in mind, that omissions are not contradictions, nor is silence concerning a fact a denial of it. If there were a perfect agreement among the inspired penmen, word for word and fact for fact, infidels would be quick to seize upon that as an indisputable evidence of collusion, and would reject the whole as a made up story.

“If there had been an *absolute* harmony, even to the minutest point, I am persuaded that, on the principles of evidence in all such cases, many would have charged collusion on the writers, and have felt that it was a corroboration of the theory of the *fictitious* origin of these compositions. But as the case stands, the discrepancies, if the compositions be fictitious indeed, are only a proof that these men attained a still more wonderful skill in aping verisimilitude than if there had been no discrepancies at all. They have left in the historic portions of their narrative an air of general harmony, with an exquisite congruity in points which lie deep below the surface,—a congruity which they must be supposed to have known would astonish the world when once discovered; and have at the same time left certain discrepancies on the surface (which criticism would be sure to point out), as if for the very pur-

pose of affording guarantees and vouchers against the suspicion of collusion! The discords increase the harmony. Once more, I asked, could I believe *Jews*, Jews in the reign of Tiberius or Nero, equal to all these wonders?"*

ANTHROPOMORPHISMS OF SCRIPTURE.

It has been objected that the Bible often speaks of God as having "hands," "feet," "eyes," as moving from place to place, as if invested with a human form, and possessing human passions, as "jealousy," "vengeance," &c. And it has been assumed, from this, that the writers of the earlier books believed God to be a being of body and parts.

Nothing could be more unjust than this. We could quote, from infidel writers, in prose and verse, passages liable to the same objection; in which God is said to *see*, and *hear*, *write his laws on nature*, *impress his will on the mind*, &c., expressions which, equally with the above, imply the possession of physical organs. Seeing is done with the eyes, writing with the hands, &c., but the use of such language by no means proves the writers to believe that God possesses such organs.

It is impossible to speak of the operations of the human mind, to say nothing of spiritual things of a higher order, without using language in a figurative sense. The above forms of expression are, therefore, unexceptionable. "They are absolutely neces-

* *Eclipse of Faith*, p. 209

sary. Without them nothing positive can be asserted of God. God himself has referred us to them. He who would get rid of them loses God entirely while he tries to purify and refine his conceptions of him.”*

Though such language is freely used in the Bible, there is also the clearest revelation of God's infinity; showing the divine purpose, that the people should not rest in the form as literally exact. We are thereby most carefully guarded from the errors of materialism on the one hand, and the not less pernicious errors of pantheism on the other. We are told that “God is a spirit”—and that “the word was made flesh”—the sublimest manifestation of the Deity ever made to man was in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The following remarks on the subject, by John Quincy Adams, are worthy of attention. “An immaterial Deity was an idea entertained by the Hebrews alone, of all the nations of antiquity. And in order to preserve them from the errors of others in this respect, one of their commandments expressly forbade them to make graven images for objects of worship. Yet in their holy books God is said to have made man in his own image, after his own likeness. And in all the interpositions of the Deity, with which their sacred history abounds, he is always represented as operating by physical organs. This has been made, by some shallow cavillers against religion, an argument to dispute the authenticity of

* Hengstenberg on the Pentateuch.

the Scriptures. It is absurd, say they, that the almighty and eternal Creator of the universe should see, and hear, and speak, and work, and rest from his labor, like the mere clod of humanity. True: but to make the conception of immaterial energies intelligible to the capacities of man, they must be presented in images of sensation. To show how impossible it is for the human mind to escape from this thralldom of sense, examine how the philosophical poet, in his essay on man, has undertaken to exhibit the Deity.

“ ‘All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glowes in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, and operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect in a hair, as heart;
As full, as perfect in vile man, that mourns
As the rapt seraph, that adores and burns;
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.’ ”*

Pope's Essay on Man, Ess. I.

THE USE OF THE THIRD PERSON.

It is denied that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, because he is so often spoken of therein, in the third person. That one so little read as Paine should make such an objection, is not a matter of surprise,

* Lectures on Rhetoric. Vol. II., p. 259.

but that astute and learned German critics should propose it, shows them sadly and obstinately pre-determined in their unbelief.

If an answer to this objection is at all needed, it is sufficient to say, that such a style of writing is often used in the classics. "There was in the army a certain Athenian, Xenophon," &c. *Anab.*, b. iii., ch. 7. "And Xenophon replied," &c. *Mem.*, b. i., ch. 3. See also Cæsar's *Comm.*

THE FRAGMENTARY AND DOCUMENTARY THEORIES.

THE genuineness of the Pentateuch, and of Genesis particularly, has been denied on the assumption that they were compiled from fragments or documents, and ascribed to Moses, but really belonging to a later age. Of the Pentateuch, it is said, "the order, the arrangement of the parts, is very peculiar. It is not strictly regular, and connected; but often abrupt and almost unnatural; it often consists of successive fragments, broken, unconnected, and these are sometimes wound up with distinct conclusions."* From this fact, it is assumed that the books were compiled from fragments of previously existing histories. But this conclusion does not follow from the premises. The fragmentary character of the books, so far as it appears, is easily accounted for. They were written during the arduous labors of Moses as governor of the Jewish nation, and their broken, disconnected style, is just what we should expect under the cir-

* Jahn.

cumstances; it is, indeed, a valuable internal evidence of their genuineness.

But there is another theory on this subject; originating, we believe, with De Wette, namely, that the Pentateuch was compiled from two pre-existing documents,—the *Jehovah* and the *Elohim* documents. This assumption is made because in certain passages the Deity is spoken of by the name *Jehovah*, in others by the name *Elohim* (God); a very slight basis, one would think, for a theory involving such a serious consequence as the genuineness of the sacred books.

We shall give the reasons why these two names were applied to God, when we come to examine Ex. vi. 3; meanwhile, we remark, that they are used in such relations, and are so intimately connected in many passages, as to afford in that way a sufficient refutation of the theory. For instance, in Gen. vii. 16, it is said, “And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God (*Elohim*) had commanded him; and the Lord (*Jehovah*) shut him in.” The two names are used in one sentence, and this sentence could not have been constructed from two distinct documents. Again, in Gen. ii. and iii. chaps., the two names are connected—Lord God (*Jehovah Elohim*); completely refuting the documentary theory.

But whether the Pentateuch was written in part from pre-existing documents, or otherwise, it is, as we now have it, the work of Moses, and divinely authenticated.

This cannot be denied without invalidating the whole Scripture canon. The New Testament proceeds on the authenticity of the books of Moses. See Matt. v. 17, 21, 27; xix. 4, 5; xxiv. 38, 39. Rom. v. 14, 16; Heb. xi. 3, 4; 2 Pet. ii. 5, &c. The existence of these books may be traced through the entire history of the Jews. Amos, living about 780 B. C., alludes to and quotes them. Compare Amos ii. 10, with Deut. xxix. 5; ch. ii. 11, 12, with Num. vi.; ch. iv. 4, with Num. xxviii. 3, and Deut. xiv. 28. We can trace these books also through the times of the Kings. Compare 1 Kings xviii. 23, 33, with Lev. i. 6-8; ch. xx. 42, with Lev. xxvii. 29. The history of the Judges gives evidence of the existence of the Pentateuch. Compare Jud. i. 20, with Num. xiv. 30; ch. v. 4, with Deut. xxxiii. 2. On these several points let the reader consult a Reference Bible, and he will find the evidence full and satisfactory, the above being but a few of the many passages which may be cited in proof. Tracing, then, the existence of the books up to a close proximity with the age of Moses, the supposition of their being forged becomes preposterous and untenable. But it is declared that the books came directly from the hand of Moses, and that an autograph copy was placed in the archives of the nation. Deut. xvii. 18, 19; xxxi. 24-26. Thus would they have borne testimony against themselves, had they been imposed upon the people at any later age, or by any other authority than that of Moses. Indeed, such an imposition was rendered impossible.

Moreover, these books contain the civil and ecclesiastical laws, and religious institutions of the nation, with an account of their origin and the source of their authority; these gave shape and character to the nation, making them a distinct and peculiar people amid all the nations of the earth, so that wherever Jews are found, they are a living proof of the existence of the books of Moses. This has been true in every age. Indeed, without these books, the Jews, as such, could have never had an existence. And we find in this fact, an unanswerable argument, if no other existed, of the genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch.

THE MYTHICAL THEORY OF STRAUS.

STRAUS, in his *Life of Christ*, assumes that the Gospels are nothing more than a collection of myths and legends, wrought into consecutive form; that the several narratives are not the work of a few individuals, but rather the outgrowth of the Jewish mind, and, consequently, not inspired or divinely authenticated.

This theory, though adopted by some infidels of our country, has not received much favor on this side of the Atlantic. Neander, in his *Life of Christ*, has fully examined and satisfactorily met Straus' objections to the Gospel narratives, and to that work we refer the reader who desires to see a thorough discussion of the question. We shall confine our remarks on the subject to a few points.

1. The theory of Straus is a mere assumption. It

is without proof. The difficulties on which he grounds his opposition to the Gospels, are not relieved by it, (unless the substitution of others of a more serious character be a relief,) and they may be removed without it; so that it is entirely uncalled for and gratuitous.

2. The plain, prosaic, simple manner of the narratives; their detailed account of many occurrences; the correspondence of their style with the character of their authors, together with the fact, that the writers relate much which they actually saw and heard, precludes the suppositions of myths and legends.

3. The abundant evidence, internal and external, of the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospels, constitutes an unanswerable objection to the assumptions of Straus. See *Paley's Evidences*.

4. The age of Christ was inadequate to the production of the Gospels. It is impossible to conceive of them as the outgrowth of the Jewish mind. Effects cannot exceed the causes which produce them, streams cannot rise higher than their fountains. But the character of Christ, as given in the Gospels, is far superior to the age in which he lived; the combined greatness of that, and all preceding ages, could not equal him. "The picture of the life of Christ, which has been handed down to us, does not exhibit the spirit of that age, but a far higher spirit, which, manifesting itself in the lineaments of the picture, exerted a regenerating influence not only on that age, but on all succeeding

generations. The image of human perfection, concretely presented in the life of Christ, stands in manifold contradiction to the tendencies of humanity at that period; no one of them, no combination of them, dead, as they were, could account for it. Whence, then, in that impure age, came such a picture, (a picture which the age itself could not completely understand, of which the age could only now and then seize a congenial trait to make a caricature of,) the contemplating of which raised the human race of that, and following ages, to a new development of spiritual life? The study of this picture has given a new view of the destiny of humanity; a new conception of what the ideal of human virtue should be, and a new theory of morals: all which vanish, however, when we withdraw our gaze from its lineaments. The spirit of ethics, which had taken to itself only certain features of the picture—broken from their connection with the whole—and was corrupted by foreign elements that had bound themselves up with the Christian consciousness, was purified again in contemplating the unmutilated historical Prototype in the days of the Reformation. And whenever the spirit of the age cuts itself loose, either in the popular turn of thought, or in the schools of philosophy, from this historical relation, it estranges itself also from the ethics of Christianity, sets up a new and different ideal of perfection from that which the revelation of Christ has grounded in the conscious-

ness of man.”* If this picture is not *real*, then is the production of it by human hands, and the effects following its creation, a more astounding miracle than any ever ascribed to Jehovah. No! No! We have pictures of philosophers and great men of every age, but this is, verily, the picture of a God.

* Neander's Life of Christ.

THE BIBLE DEFENDED

AGAINST THE OBJECTIONS OF INFIDELITY.

Objections based upon the Old Testament.

GENESIS.

Gen. i. 1.—In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

THE first objection brought by geologists against the Bible is, that it fixes the date of the original creation but six or eight thousand years ago, which that science teaches is not true.

This is a misrepresentation: It declares, simply, that God originally “created the heaven and the earth,” “in the beginning;” but, whether this beginning was the commencement of time, or when, is not said; how far back it was before the creation of man, or before the present geological period, we have no data for computation. As this account of the creation was merely incidental to the great object of

revelation, it was not consistent that all its particulars should be here detailed.

Gen. i. 2.—And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

“Without form and void,” i. e., desolate, confused, in a chaotic condition. How long the earth was in this chaotic state—or what time elapsed between the original creation and this state—or by what processes the world reached this chaotic condition—are points upon which we have no revelation; and it does no violence to the text to suppose that, between the original creation, and the period introduced by the second verse, the earth passed through several geological ages. This sufficiently answers all objections to the Bible, founded on the extreme antiquity of the globe indicated by geology.

If it be said that there is no evidence of such a chaos now discoverable; that the unbroken succession of fossils and geological phenomena—and that the old coast line of England, Niagara Falls, &c., forbid the supposition of such a chaotic period; we reply, 1. That chaos may have been of short duration, so as not to interfere with the succession of geological phenomena; 2. The old coast line of England, Niagara Falls, and like phenomena, may have existed during that chaos, and, at best, the argument from their appearances rests upon so slender a

basis, and is open to so many objections as to render it very doubtful indeed; 3. There could be, in the nature of the case, no evidence of a chaos left upon the globe.

Previous to entering upon a consideration of the succeeding verses, we shall offer a few remarks upon the present condition of geology as a science, and its relation to the Mosaic account of creation.

1. Every system of geology now received is open to serious objections and insuperable difficulties. As a science it is yet in its infancy, and liable to constant changes as new facts are discovered. As dogmatically as we may assert and maintain our theories, they must yield with the advance of knowledge. "A stray splinter of cone-bearing wood—a fish's scull or tooth, the vertebra of a reptile, the humerus of a bird, the jaw of a quadruped—all, any of these things, weak and insignificant as they may seem, become in such a quarrel, too strong for us and our theory, the puny fragment in the grasp of truth forms as irresistible a weapon as the dry bone did in that of Samson of old, and our slaughtered sòphisms lie piled up, 'heaps on heaps,' before it."*

This should lead us to receive, with great caution, the theories and speculations of geologists.

2. Geology tells us the present condition of the earth, but the processes by which it reached that condition it does not, and cannot reveal. "It furnishes no clue by which to unravel the unapproach-

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* Foot Prints, p. 313.

able mysteries of creation; these mysteries belong to the wondrous Creator, and to him only. We attempt to theorize upon, and to reduce them to law, and all nature rises up against us in our presumptuous rebellion.”*

3. “Let it be remembered that there is no *absolute* chronometer in geology, and I very much doubt whether there is a fixed *relative* one among fossiliferous rocks, because there are fossil remains common to them all; and again, fossils innumerable are common, both to *tertiary* and *secondary* strata; a fact that repudiates the assumed distinction. The statics of a sound chronology being absent, prudence would require us to be cautious and less dogmatical in a science confessedly of intense interest, but comparatively young in age. Besides, fossiliferous rocks are *local*, not *circumambient*.”†

4. Many of the conclusions of geologists depend upon analogical reasoning, which is not always a trustworthy mode of argumentation. “Analogy is an unsafe ground of reasoning; and its conclusions should be seldom received, without some degree of distrust.”‡ “It may afford a greater or less degree of probability, according as the things compared are more or less similar in their nature. But it ought to be observed, that, as this kind of reasoning can afford only probable evidence, at best, so, unless great caution be used, we are apt to be led into error

* Miller's Foot Prints, &c. See note on Gen. viii. 1.

† Murray's Truth of Revelation. ‡ Hedge's Logic.

by it. For we are naturally disposed to conceive a greater similitude between things than there really is." *

5. "In order to interpret the Mosaic cosmogony aright, another fact to be borne in mind is, that every visible object is spoken of, not according to its scientific character—that would have been not merely improper but impossible, except at the price of consistency—but *optically*, or according to its appearance; just as, with all our knowledge of the solar system, we speak, even in scientific works, of the sun as *rising* and *setting*. * * * * * And if to this optical mode of description it be objected that as there *was* no human spectator, the account can only be received and interpreted as an allegorical representation, we reply that it is the very method of answering its great design—that of being popularly intelligible; and that the way in which it becomes both intelligible and vividly graphic is by placing the reader, in imagination, in the position of a spectator."†

We have already suggested a mode of removing geological objections to the Bible, *i. e.*, the supposition of an indefinite period between the first and second verses of Gen. i. And that all geological changes necessary to reduce the world from a state of chaos to a condition fit for the residence of man occurred in

* Jamison's Logic. See also Butler's Ana. Introduc. Chalmers' Post. Works, Vol. IX., p. 58, and Upham's Ment. Phil. p. 1, c. XI.

† Man Primeval, pp. 11, 12.

six literal days. This theory originated with Dr. Chalmers. Dr. J. P. Smith suggests another.* He admits the former, but supposes the chaos mentioned in the second verse not to have been universal, but local; confined to a small portion of the earth in which man first appeared. This theory obviates the objection mentioned under verse second.

There is another theory which assumes that the word day, translated *day* in the first chapter, signifies an indefinite period. In v. 5, it is said, "*the evening and the morning were the first day*, literally—*one day*. The numerical one (Heb. *ahad*), is used in the sense of *certain*, *peculiar*, *special*; it is so used in Dan. viii. 13: Eze. vii. 5: Cant. vi. 9: Gen. xxxvii. 20: 1 Kings xix. 4; xx. 13.

"Now if this sense may be admitted in the present passage, (Gen. i. 5,) to which we see no valid objection, the meaning will be, that the evening and the morning constituted a *certain*, a *special*, a *peculiar* day, a day *sui generis*; in other words, a period of time of indefinite length. For that the Heb. *yom*, *day*, is repeatedly used in the indefinite sense of *epoch* or *period*, no one will question who is at all acquainted with the Scriptural idiom. Thus in the very first instance, in which it occurs after the history of the six days' work, as if to furnish us with authority for such a rendering, we find it employed in a collective sense to denote the whole six days' period of the creation; 'these are the generations

* Geol. and Gen.

of the heavens and the earth, in *the day* (*beyom*) that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.' So in Job xviii. 20, it appears to be put for the whole period of man's life; 'they that come after him shall be astonished at *his day* (*yomer*;) and in Isa. xxx. 8, for all future time; 'now go note it in a book, that it may be for the *time to come*, (lit. *for the latter day*;) for ever and ever.' In like manner the phrase, 'the day of the Lord,' so often occurring, undoubtedly denotes a period of indeterminate length. To this it may indeed be objected, that the day here spoken of is said to have been made up of evening and morning; and how, it will be asked, could a single evening and morning constitute a day of indefinite duration? To this we reply, that nothing is more common in Hebrew than to find the singular used in a collective sense equivalent to the plural. When it is said, therefore, that 'evening and the morning were a certain day,' we understand it as equivalent to saying, that a series or succession of evenings and mornings (Gr. *nuchthemera*, twenty-four hour days) constituted a peculiar kind of day, a period of undefined extent; and so of the subsequent days of the creative week; the sense of the common day being really involved in that of the other; or in other words, each of the six indefinite days or periods being made up of an equally indefinite number of common or twenty-four hour days. It is doubtless under some disadvantages that this interpretation is thus briefly and nakedly proposed, but as our limits will not allow enlargement, we

have no alternative but to leave it to commend itself as best it may to the judgment of the reader. By the author it has not been rashly adopted.”*

To this it is objected, that the Scriptures state—“God made all things in six days and rested on the seventh day; wherefore, Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it;” but this language does not compel us to understand literally the word day. A too rigid adherence to the *letter* of the law would involve us in serious difficulties. If nothing more nor less than twenty-four hours can be meant by the term day, then that whole period must be kept as the Sabbath, and every seventh twenty-four hours exactly from the beginning; this would demand a divine mode of reckoning: moreover, the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, is, by such rigid interpretation, encumbered with serious difficulties. It is said God “rested from all his labor” on the seventh day; if this means the seventh twenty-four hours, then it would imply that he resumed his labor on the eighth day—the beginning of a new week. But from what did he rest? Not from the work of sustaining and directing the worlds he had made—not from the work of providence—but he rested (literally *ceased*) from the work of creation; and as he never resumed that work, he is still resting, or, more properly, that cessation still continues during this seventh-period of time.

* Bush on Gen., p. 32.

The meaning of the law is, that one-seventh of man's time is to be consecrated specially to religious worship: this is seen from other sacred seasons, as the seventh year, the seventh-seventh year, or Jubilee. During six periods of time was God engaged in the work of creation, on the seventh he rested; therefore, during six periods, or portions of man's time, may he work, but the seventh must be a Sabbath unto the Lord.

We do not wish it to be understood that this theory is essentially necessary to reconcile the Mosaic account of creation with a scientific cosmogony; we present it as *one* of the theories of reconciliation; we have alluded to others, and shall notice still another in its proper place.

Gen. i. 3.—And God said let there be light.

When violent chemical action was excited among the chaotic elements, such as would be necessary to reduce them to order, there must have been evolved in great profusion the imponderable agents—light, heat and electricity, which must have encircled the globe with a brilliant photosphere. Sir William Herschel thought, perhaps, “the Aurora borealis and the Aurora australis, the lights which even still hover about our earth, where the atmosphere is dry and favorable for the exhibition of electrical phenomena, are faint remains of that light which once invested our world.”

Gen. i. 5.—And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night.

This, says the infidel, cannot be true, as the sun was not made until the fourth day, and there could be no day without the sun.

1. This objection assumes a greater knowledge of the condition of things at that time than is warranted by our sources of information.

2. It is not true that there could be no day without the sun.

3. It is not said that the sun, as a body, was created on the fourth day, but that it was then appointed for a special purpose. It may have existed as a part of the solar system before that time. See note on Gen. i. 16.

Gen. i. 11.—And God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth; and it was so.

Modern chemistry teaches that the first atmosphere must have abounded in carbonic acid, this gas being the last to enter into combinations. But this was particularly favorable to the development of plants. The earth, with its high temperature, abundance of water, its atmosphere surrounded by a brilliant photosphere and highly charged with carbonic acid, afforded intense stimulus to vegeta-

tion, which must have been of a character never equalled, for never since have conditions been so favorable for its development. This profuse and excessive vegetation would soon reduce the atmosphere to a condition fitted for the support of animal life. That such a period of gigantic flora did exist in the infancy of the world, the researches of geology place beyond all doubt. The evidences of it are found all through the Paleozoic age.

Gen. i. 16.—And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; He made the stars also.

Infidels object to this passage, that it makes the creation of the sun and planets subsequent to that of the earth, which, according to science, could not be.

But the text teaches us no such thing. It, with the context, says, "God made two great lights, literally *lighters* or *light-bearers*, and *set* or *appointed* them for special purposes therein described." It is said, "he made the stars also," but what stars they were, or when made, we are not informed.

Gen. i. 27.—And God made great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind; and God saw that it was good.

The earth was now fitted by preceding geological processes, not only for the support of animals, but for their monstrous growth and rapid multiplication. Accordingly, the text seems to speak of the secondary age when, geology tells us, monsters of the deep, gigantic birds, enormous reptiles, as ichthyosaurs, plesiosaurs, cetiosaurs, &c., &c., reveled in the luxuriant vegetation of the earth, or sported in its seas and oceans; and whose huge fossils are found throughout the cretaceous, öolitic, trias and carboniferous formations which make up that age.

We might point out still further the agreement of science with this course of creation, but as we have chosen rather to meet the objections of infidelity, we shall pass the subject with this remark. We have accounts of the origin of the world from Egyptians, Greeks, Brahmins and Chinese, from Sanconiathan to the Edda, yet this account by Moses, older than them all, is the only one that agrees with modern science. And this simple, unscientific narrative, written for popular use, is found, after the lapse of thousands of years, to accord better with the latest developments of science than many scientific treatises written a century ago. Why is this? Can infidels explain it?

It is but just to say, that there are many who do not receive either of the foregoing geological theories, but believe the creation occupied only six literal days, and that all the existing strata were formed and deposited in their present position in the period between the commencement of the creation

and subsidence of the deluge. This theory is opposed to the preceding views, only so far as it supposes the final results were brought about not by slowly operating natural forces merely, but that the processes were accelerated by the interposition of divine power. Nor is such an interposition inconsistent with the divine character; the present structure of the earth's crust exerts an important influence on the condition of its inhabitants, and is, doubtless, the result of causes designed to give it that form. It is contended, that all the elements of existing strata are not found in the primitive rocks from which they are said to be derived; that no known forces could have disintegrated the original igneous crust of the earth in any length of time; that no natural forces could have separately deposited alumine, silice, salt, lime, coal, &c., or diffused particular strata over large spaces; and that the denudations and flexions of many strata prove they were formed rapidly, in short periods of time. For these and other plausible reasons the other theories are rejected and a new one formed, which we need not detail here.

Enough has been said, doubtless, to convince the reader of two things:—

1. That these theories, so various—so conflicting—yet separately sustained by the most eminent geologists, proves how little certainty attaches to much of the teachings of this science.

2. That he who asserts (as has been asserted).

that geology contradicts the Bible, is ignorant of the subject, or utters what he knows to be false.

Gen. i. 26.—And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

It has been said that this text teaches that God has such a body as man possesses, and consequently is a being of body and parts. This arises from a misunderstanding of the phrase *image of God*. These words signify—1, the natural image, as an immortal, spiritual being—2, the moral image, “in righteousness and true holiness,” and 3, the political image, having dominion over all the earth.

Gen. ii. 3.—And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

There is no contradiction, as infidels pretend, between this text and John v. 7, “My Father worketh hitherto and I work.” The former referring to a cessation from *creating* and *making*, and the latter to the ceaseless workings of providence.

The division of time into periods of seven days

is perfectly arbitrary, depending on no natural phenomena whatever, yet it is found among Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Goths, Hindoos, &c., &c.; a fact totally inexplicable but on the ground of the antiquity and authenticity of the Scriptures.

Gen. ii. 7.—And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

21.—And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof.

22.—And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

This account of man's origin is contradictory (as a celebrated infidel has asserted), to the account given in Gen. i. 27, 28. There is nothing in the one which is contrary to the other.

In the first chapter is stated briefly the fact, that God made the first man and woman on the sixth day; after closing the general account of creation, the writer returns to speak more particularly of the mode of their creation, and the habitation assigned them; and he does this without contradicting, in the slightest degree, any part of his former statement.

Gen. ii. 9.—And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food ; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The tree of life. Doubtless, so called, because, “serving as a visible sign or pledge of the continuance to him of a blessed natural life, as long as he should continue obedient. Regarded in this light he undoubtedly often ate of the fruit of the tree before his fall, not perhaps as a means of sustaining life or of making him immortal, but *sacramentally*, as Christians now eat the Lord’s supper, to confirm their faith in the divine promises, and as a symbol of spiritual blessings imparted to the soul.”

Tree of knowledge of good and evil. So called, because appointed as the test of his goodness and obedience, and through which he came to know evil.

Gen. ii. 19.—And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them ; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

This has been pronounced “zoologically impossible ;” but the text states that it was done by the aid of divine power, which at once obviates all diffi-

culties and refutes all objections; for "all things are possible with God."

Gen. iii. 14.—And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.

Infidels have always manifested a great deal of sympathy for this serpent. Whether it is a fellow-feeling which makes them so wondrous kind, we will not say; but certain it is, they have made many assaults upon the text and context. Our English translators, and ancient tradition, make the *serpent* the intermediate agent of the fall, but there is now no means of determining what beast it was. Nor is this at all important. The style of his speech, the terms of his curse, the prophecy of his conflict with the Messiah, and the language of other passages referring to him, prove, beyond doubt, that it was an intelligent, though evil agent, who assumed a bodily form for the purpose of seducing Eve from her innocency. To the measure of the curse which fell upon the real agent there could be no objection, but it has been objected that a beast, incapable of sin itself, should suffer for the sin of another. To this we reply :—

1. That it is "in accordance with the usual me-

thod of the divine dispensations to put some token of displeasure upon the instrument of offence, as well as upon the sinner who employs it." Thus the beast, with which man sinned, was destroyed with the sinner; Lev. xx. 15. The golden calf was burned; Ex. xxxii. 20. The censurs of Korah and his party were condemned. By such tokens was God's intense abhorrence of sin made manifest.

2. There was no actual suffering or torture imposed upon the serpent. God certainly had the right to fix its position in the scale of animal life.

3. *Dust shalt thou eat.* This is a figurative expression, denoting a debased, groveling condition:—"They (the nations) shall lick the dust like a serpent," that is, be overthrown and disgraced.

Gen. iii. 16-19.—The penalty of the first sin.

It has been objected that a penalty of such magnitude as here described, should be adjudged an offence so small.

" Had he leagured heaven
With beings powerful, numberless, and dreadful,
Strong as the enginery that rocks the world,
When all its pillars tremble, * * * *

This

Had been rebellion worthy of the name,
Worthy of punishment. But what did man?
Tasted an apple! and the fragile scene,
Eden, and innocence, and human bliss,
The nectar-flowing streams, life-giving fruits,
Celestial shades, and amaranthine flowers,
Vanish; and sorrow, toil, and pain, and death,
Cleave to him by an everlasting curse."

1. The commandment was light, but the offence was of fearful magnitude.

2. The very lightness of the commandment—the ease with which it might have been kept, only aggravated the offence. Had the temptation been gr̄eat, or the burden of the law severe, there might have been some ground of complaint.

3. It was distrusting God's word, and virtually charging him with lying and injustice.

4. It was throwing off all allegiance to him, and cutting themselves loose from the sole source of happiness and holiness.

5. It was a disruption of the harmony of the moral government upon which hangs the happiness of untold millions, and was, so far, an invasion of their rights.

Some have impiously dared to arraign God for placing man in a position whence he was liable to fall. But he was surrounded by everything conducive to his happiness and continuance in holiness had he so pleased, so that God is not responsible for his fall. So far as human conception can reach, it was impossible that man should be a probationary free agent, and yet be irresistibly prevented from sinning. Either he must cease to be a probationer or be liable to fall.

The dissatisfaction which infidels express to this account of the origin of evil is very unreasonable. We know that evil is in the world. The evidences of this are unmistakeable and universal. How did it originate? To this question we have no clue

aside from the Bible, and without that, it must forever remain involved in a labyrinth of confusion.

Gen. iii. 20.—And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

Was or *was to be* the mother of all living. The truth of this is denied by a certain class of ethnologists. It is maintained by them that pictures, manuscripts, monuments, crania, and other relics of antiquity, prove the existence of several distinct races of men as far back as five thousand and six thousand years.

We have not space to enter largely into the discussion of this question, and shall, therefore, confine our remarks to a few points.

The above hypothesis depends—1. Upon the proof that these relics do show the existence of different races of men—2. Upon the proof that these relics are of such remote antiquity as is claimed.

1. Upon the first point we would say simply, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove that the existence of more than two (white and black) races was recognized at any very early period.

2. Passing this, the whole question must be regarded as resting on the second point—the antiquity of these relics. It is thus reduced to a question of dates. And here we discover, that our opponents stand on very questionable ground.

Serious alterations have been made in the hiero-

glyphics of Egyptian relics, and false dates imposed thereon. See *Rev. Des Deux Mondes* Ap. 1848, pp. 66, 77; Jan., 1849, pp. 87, 93.

Gross errors have also been discovered in Chinese and Hindoo manuscripts.*

The jealousy between rival sects and castes among ancient nations, each striving to outstrip the others in the antiquity of its traditions and the remoteness of its origin, was a fruitful source of error and imposition in their records.

And it may well be doubted too, whether we have yet the true key to remove the difficulties of oriental computation, and unlock the chronological mysteries of antiquity.

These considerations vitally affect the theory of our ethnologists, while, on the other hand, the evidence of the antiquity and authenticity of the Bible is irrefutable and complete.

But there is another theory of the races, that of Professor Agassiz, which classifies and distributes mankind upon a geographical basis, after the manner of De Candolle's distribution of plants.† In this system each zone has its peculiar fauna and flora,—its own beasts, birds, and races of men. This theory is based upon the assumption, that each species of animals and birds was produced in the locality assigned it, but of this we have no proof. Moreover,

* See note on Gen. viii. 7.

† See *Chris. Examiner*, 1850. *Types of Mankind*. Gould and Agassiz's *Zoology*.

the theory is very imperfect; men, beasts and birds, having so migrated as to render it almost impossible to fix the locality of some races and species.

But admitting the facts of this theory, they do not necessarily preclude the unity of the races. If it be said, that we know of no natural causes which could produce the different races from the original stock; it may be also said, that we know of no natural causes that would produce men and women spontaneously in different localities, so it is not more unphilosophical to attribute the differences to natural causes operating on the primitive stock, than to suppose, as does M. Agassiz, men and women grew up spontaneously.

But we shall prove that the different races originated from the primitive stock, by a direct exercise of divine power. If this be objected to as a miracle, we reply, that Almighty God, as the first cause, must have originated the races by some means or other, and it is not less a miracle to form them separately in different localities, than to produce them from an original and uniform stock.

We shall take up this discussion again, and submit the proof above alluded to when we come to consider Gen. xi. 8. In the mean while, we leave the subject with this remark. If natural history teaches that there now exist races of men so different in complexion, features, osteological formation, cuticular secretions, &c., as to forbid the supposition that they proceeded from one head by the course of natural generation, the Bible teaches as plainly and

positively, that Eve was the mother of all living men. Now to receive one of these propositions does not necessarily imply the rejection of the other. The natural historian need not reject the Bible, nor the believer in the Bible repudiate natural history. If both propositions are true, then there is some mode of reconciling them, even though that mode were now to us unknown. It would be the part of wisdom to acknowledge the truth, and wait for further light to see our way out of the difficulties involving it.

Gen. iv. 16.—And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.

It has been urged from this text, that the Bible teaches the Lord is in some places and not in others. This is not true. To *seek the Lord*, to *stand before* or *in the presence of the Lord*, to *draw near the Lord*, &c., are phrases used to express religious worship, and *before the Lord*, the *presence of the Lord*, sometimes denote the places or localities where such worship was performed, and where there were special manifestations of divine power. Cain went out from the place of worship and of divine manifestation.

Gen. iv. 17.—And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived, and bare Enoch.

“Where could he have got a wife?” it has been

triumphantly asked; "no daughters of the first pair are mentioned until after the birth of Seth." But this does not prove that they had none. Is it probable that this perfect and vigorous pair could have had but three children in one hundred and thirty years? This would be a very absurd position to take. The presumption is they had many children. It is distinctly asserted, (Gen. v. 4,) that Adam "begat sons and daughters," meaning doubtless, sons and daughters not named in any catalogue of his children, and this must have been before as well as after the birth of Seth. Nor did Cain commit sin by marrying his sister; there was a necessity for such marriages at that time, and the law forbidding them had not been given, and without law there was no sin.

Gen. v. 27.—And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years; and he died.

The longevity of the ancients is abundantly proved by profane history. (See Burnet's Theory, b. ii., chap. iv.: Stackhouse on Gen.: *Historia Sinica* Martinü : Du Halde's China, vol. i.)

Gen. vi. 4.—There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the Sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same

became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown.

We need scarcely say, that the text itself gives no countenance to the monstrous notion of an illicit intercourse between angelic beings and the children of earth; this is a fragment of mythology which has been unnaturally grafted upon it, and the ridicule to which the Bible has been subject in consequence is, therefore, altogether misplaced. The phrase, *Sons of God*, designates God's pious and worshiping people:—Job, i. 6. ii, 1: Hos. i. 10: Jno. i. 12. The word rendered *giants* signifies also *fallen men*; hence, some understand the text to teach, that unequal marriages between the pious and the wicked resulted in great apostacy, and in a race of cruel, warring men.

It is true, however, that giants did exist in the earlier ages of the world. Rees' Cyclo., art. Giant: Huctui's Inquiries, b. ii.: Aug. De Civ. Dei. vi. 15: Pliny, vi. 1.

Gen. vi. 6.—And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

In several passages of Scripture God is said, as above, to repent; yet, it is said also most positively, that he cannot repent. It is obvious, therefore, that the word *repent* can not be used in these two classes of texts in the same sense. The above text is a

figurative expression adapted to the simplest intellects, and none but the most obstinate could stumble over it.

Gen. viii. 1-24.—The Deluge.

This is one of the most severely contested facts of revelation. It must certainly be regarded as an extraordinary event, unequalled in the annals of man, and not to be judged by the ordinary laws and operations of nature. It was brought about and accomplished by omnipotence. This, at once, vacates all science, and removes all objections from that source. It is above and beyond the domain of science, and is not to be criticised by scientific principles. On this ground we are not bound to notice any objections to it as unphilosophical. Yet we know of no valid objection from any department of science to the fact of a universal deluge. True, great names in geology have doubted or denied it, but names equally great have given credence to it.

It must be remembered, however, that geology is not a system of demonstrated truths, but of deductions, inferences and assumptions, based upon or drawn from a limited view of certain physical phenomena on the earth's crust. The science is consequently imperfect, and liable to constant changes.

Geologists, too, have great fondness for large numbers and imposing speculations, often putting thousands of years where hundreds would answer the purpose. In the fascinations of their study,

and their intense solicitude for their theories, the pet children of their brains, they are apt to forget the integrity of the WORD.

But whatever may be the theories and inferences of geologists, *no single ascertained fact of geology can be adduced as direct testimony against the fact of a universal deluge.* This is our deliberate conviction after a careful examination of opposing arguments and theories.

The language clearly indicates that the deluge was accompanied with extraordinary physical phenomena. "The windows of heaven were opened"—stupendous cataracts poured from above; "the fountains of the great deep were broken up," &c., signifying, doubtless, the upheaval of earth's crust, the displacement of ocean beds, the sinking of mountains, and the burial at once and forever of all relics of that guilty race, whose dark and damning sins called down such terrible retribution.

It has been said that the ark could not contain a pair of all the species of animals. But who dare limit the resources of almighty power and infinite wisdom? What, would you make a miracle of it? says the objector. Certainly, it was in character and design unquestionably miraculous, and we would as soon apply the tests of science to the turning of water into wine, (Jno. ii.) or the raising of Lazarus from the dead. (Jno. xi. 43.)

Yet the objection is of little force. There are in all two hundred and fifty thousand species of living animals, but of these are excluded, of course, all

that live in water, aquatic and amphibious. Perhaps we might also exclude all whose spawn or larvæ could be preserved, and many oviparous animals might be kept in the egg instead of living specimens. Be this as it may, we thus dispose of all the radiates, mollusks, articulates, and vertebrates, the whole class of fishes, and most, if not all, of reptiles. This leaves the mammals, numbering something over twelve hundred, perhaps as high as fifteen hundred, and birds, embracing five thousand species; from the former, we, of course, exclude all whales or cetacians, which greatly reduces the whole number.

The ark is estimated at over thirty thousand tons burden, or more than equal to eighteen first class packet ships. So there can be no reasonable doubts as to its capacity to carry everything necessary to its purpose.

It has been objected that these animals, from climates the extremes of heat and cold, could not live in one locality; this will be sufficiently answered by a visit to any of our extensive menageries.

The fact of a universal deluge has been disputed upon the ground, that some ancient records run back anterior to the date of the deluge, as ascertained from Scripture. These records are from three sources—China, India, and Egypt. But we have already shown, in our remarks on Gen. iii. 20, how little confidence can be placed in these records. The nations of old were strongly disposed to carry

their traditions back to a fabulous antiquity, and to claim their origin from the gods. Bunsen admits this in the case of the Egyptians,—see Egypt's place in Uni. Hist. See also *Chronologie der Egypter*, *Handbuch der Chronologie*, *Cosmos*, &c.

That Egyptian monuments were altered in the times of the Pharaohs, may be satisfactorily seen by reference to *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1847, p. 1028—1849, p. 93, and Poole's *Horæ Egyptiacæ*. See also for the antiquity of the Chinese, Gutzlaff's *China Opened*.

“Traditions of a general deluge have been found among all nations of the ancient world, and disseminated among modern nations in the most distant and opposite parts of the earth, and in all their different degrees of civilization. Wherever there is any attempt to account for the existence of the present population, it begins with the preservation of one pair of human beings, or a single family, by some floating vessel. This is usually connected with a previously existing race—with the anger of the supreme being against their sins—and with the desolation of the earth, and the race of men, by a general inundation.

“There are no conflicting traditions. The harmony among all nations is such as could have arisen only from the fact itself. We find Chaldeans, Phœnicians, Assyrians, Persians, Chinese, Hindoos, Mexicans, Peruvians, North Americans, Islanders of Oceanica, all preserving in their mythologies or their histories, the principal facts recorded by Moses.

They all embody one story"—Redford's Holy Scrip. verified. See also Cyclo. Bib. Lit., vol. I., p. 542: Faber's Orig. Pagan Idol. i., p. 206, 218; Asiat. Researches; Mitford's Greece, Humboldt's Researches.

Gen. xi. 1-9.—The confusion of tongues.

We have here an account of the building of the tower of Babel, the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion of mankind over the earth. The inspired historian had already stated, in the preceding chapter, that men were divided into distinct nations and dispersed through the world; in this place he details more particularly the cause of that dispersion. Here we have the origin of the languages, as well as the races of men. The chief ground of distinction between the different races is found in the constitutional peculiarities which adapt them to their different localities.

It is said in the text, that "the Lord scattered the people abroad upon the face of all the earth;" this being true, he must, at the same time, have given them a physical adaptation to the several portions of the earth whither they were sent. The different races originated then from one primitive stock by the exercise of divine power. At a subsequent period (Gen. xv. 11-12), there was another divine interposition producing from one father two races, the Jews and Arabs, widely differing from each other. Thus it is, that revelation alone solves the problem of the races, and establishes the fact of their common origin.

Independent of the history of the origin of mankind, the Bible further proves the unity of the races, by the relation which all men sustain to their first head, as indicated in the consequences of his transgression, &c.—by the relation which all men sustain to Christ, as their common Redeemer, and to the scheme of salvation—by positive and direct declarations, as, Gen. iii. 20 : Acts xvii. 26, &c.

Gen. xii. 11–13.—And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know thou art a fair woman to look upon : therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife : and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister : that it may be well with me for thy sake ; and my soul shall live because of thee.

There can be no question but that Abram did wrong here, but neither the Divine being, nor the writer of this book, is responsible for his fault. There is not the slightest approval of his act. It is given simply as an historical fact—and that these failings of God's servants are so impartially related in the Bible, without any attempt at palliation or

concealment, is strong proof of its historical truthfulness.

Gen. xiii. 7.—And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle : and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

It has been argued that this passage must have been written after the Canaanites were driven out of the land. But it is said "the land was not able to bear" Abram and Lot, for the reason that "the Canaanite and Perizzite dwelled in the land;" there was not room for them and these heathen.

Again, the Jews expected the heathen nations to be driven out of Canaan, according to God's promise.

Gen. xiv. 14.—And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

It has been assumed that there was no city called Dan, until the time of the Judges, (Jud. xviii. 27, 29), consequently Genesis was not written till after the Judges. We reply—

1. The text does not say Dan was a city; it may have been a stream (one of the sources of Jordan), or a district of country.

2. There were two Dans; Dan-Laish, above named, and Dan-Jaan (2 Sam. xxiv. 6), the affixes serving to distinguish them.

Gen. xix. 8.—Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

Lot's offer of his daughters to the vicious mob which beset his house, though it shows how inviolable he regarded the laws of hospitality, can not be justified on any sound or safe principles. Nor is there any attempt to justify it in the Scriptures. It is stated as a part of history.

Gen. xix. 26.—But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

This has been a matter of much ridicule with infidels. It is worthy of remark, however, that Lieutenant Lynch saw upon the shores of the Dead Sea "a pillar of salt capped with carbonate of lime," which the tradition of the place says is Lot's wife.

Gen. xxii. 1.—And it came to pass, after these things God did tempt Abraham.

This is said to contradict James i. 13. "Let no man say when he is tempted I am tempted of God, for God can not be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." But the word *tempt* is in these passages used in different senses. God does *tempt* or *try providentially* his servants, but he never solicits a man to sin.

Gen. xxii. 1-18.—The offering of Isaac.

This occurrence has been denounced as unworthy of God, who is said to order it. But the circumstance is fully justified by its design and results. Not only was Abraham proved, but his faith was greatly strengthened. He complied with the divine requisition, believing that God would deliver his son (Heb. xi. 19), and when that deliverance was wrought he could not but trust him more implicitly than ever. See page 88.

Gen. xxiii. 2.—And Sarah died in Kirjath Arba; the same is Hebron.

As the Hebrews called Kirjath-Arba Hebron, after they had taken it, the text is supposed to have been written after that event. There is no difficulty in admitting the latter clause of the text to be the work of some transcriber; but the original name of the city was Aebron, and this name was restored after its capture by the Israelites, because of its patriarchal associations.

Gen. xxxiv. 7.—And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel.

It is contended that this could not have been written until after Palestine was called Israel. The phrase *in Israel* does not mean the land but the family of Israel.

Gen. xxxvi. 2-3.—Esau's wives.

There is an apparent discrepancy between this account of Esau's wives, and that in chap. xxvi. 34; it must be borne in mind, however, that in the east different names were often applied to one person. Esau had three wives, and each of them is spoken of under two names, making six names for them all.

Gen. xxxvi. 31.—And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any kings over the children of Israel.

"The writer of this," says an infidel work now before me, "must have lived at a period when kings were common in Israel." But this does not follow necessarily; kings had been promised to Israel (Gen. xxxv. 11), and were expected; moreover, the text

states simply there were kings in Edom when there were none in Israel.

Gen. xlviii. 7.—And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, who are these? * * * *

10.—(Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see.)

This passage has been unjustly treated as a contradiction. Israel's eyes were so dim, that though he could discern Joseph's sons at some distance, he could not see them distinctly or recognize them, hence, his inquiry and the necessity of bringing them near. How blind, or dishonest, is infidelity!

EXODUS.

Ex. ii. 16.—And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to-day?

In v. 27, it is said, this Reuel became Moses' father-in-law, but in chap. iii. 1, his father-in-law is called Jethro, and in Num. x. 29, Raguel is said to be his father-in-law. These are not contradictions; the several names belonging to one and the same person; a custom very prevalent in the east.

Ex. vi. 2.—And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord,

3.—And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

Infidels have asserted that this verse contradicts Gen. xxii. 14, "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh."

1. Abraham appropriated this name to a place, not to God.

2. The name God (*Elohim*) is used in the earlier books of the Bible, to designate the deity in a *general* sense, as the Creator,—a God of power; the name Lord (*Jehovah*), designates him in a *special* sense, as manifesting himself in providence and grace,—a God of goodness and mercy. The text reads—“And God (*Elohim*) spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord (*Jehovah*), and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty (*El Shaddai*); but by my name *Jehovah* was I not known to them.” Not that the bare word was unknown to them, but its import—its full meaning, as designating a God of providence, making himself known in the deliverance and support of his people (as he was just about to do for the Israelites), this was not known to them.

Ex. vii. 3.—And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

In objecting to this passage, infidel writers have usually placed it in a false light, *viz.*, that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart and then punished him for his hardness of heart. We shall submit several thoughts on the whole subject involved, which may, perhaps, enable us to form a more correct estimate of the text and its connections.

1. Pharaoh is here dealt with not in his personal, but in his official character; as the representative,

and an integral part of a guilty nation, who, for centuries, had oppressed God's people and crushed them in merciless bondage. Their crimes had long and loudly called for vengeance, while the prolonged period of mercy aggravated their guilt, and the hour of retribution had now come. If at this point, Pharaoh yields and allows the Israelites to go in peace, he and his guilty people will escape their merited punishment, and the end of justice be defeated. This shows at once that the hardening of his heart was a judicial act,—a part of the terrible judgment to which he had made himself obnoxious.

2. In hardening his heart God did not *create* any evil there, the evil already existed; it was simply bringing to sight what had a being in concealment; or rather, it was making apparent in a certain way what had been previously developing itself in another. This, in the ways of providence, is often a powerful means of bringing the wicked to a sense of their condition and effecting their conversion.

3. In hardening his heart God did not *aggravate* the evil existing there. Nothing was added to the degree of wickedness already possessed. God may render "a man incapable of receiving grace, in order to mitigate his guilt; for, if the man in question had the eyes of his spirit open, were he aware what was offered to him and yet resisted, he were a far greater subject of punishment than without this capability he could be."* Furthermore, when a man's sin reaches that degree of intensity which

* Olshausen.

constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost, the spirit may be withdrawn, and the man's heart thus be hardened without there being any aggravation of his wickedness on the part of God.

These considerations, we think, obviate the objection to this passage usually made by infidels.

Ex. vii. 11.—Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

Unbelievers have depended upon this passage for proof that the magicians performed miracles as well as Moses. But in every instance in which they attempt to compete with Moses, they fall infinitely below him, and at last give up the attempt, confessing that "the finger of God" was with him. When, therefore, infidels summon these magicians against the miracles of Moses, they are bound to stand by the testimony of their witnesses, which is conclusive against themselves.

As this is the first recorded instance of miracles wrought by the agency of man, we shall offer a few remarks upon that topic. A miracle is a suspension of, or deviation from the laws of nature, wrought mediately, or immediately by Almighty God in proof of some particular doctrine, or to attest the authority of some particular person. The objections to miracles, now usually advanced, are from

Voltaire and Hume. The former says: "It is impossible that God, a being infinitely wise, should make laws in order to violate them—that the world must have been so constructed in the beginning as to preclude the necessity of subsequent changes."

This is raising a false issue, God does not make laws to violate them, and miracles neither suppose nor imply any such thing.

Again, if it is impossible for God to suspend or deviate from the course of nature, then his power is limited; he is circumscribed by material existences; he is not infinite; in other words, he is not God and there is no God; if it is possible for him to do these, then the objection has no force.

The position of Mr. Hume was more bold than this but not more reasonable. He says: "No testimony for any kind of miracle can ever possibly amount to a probability, much less to a proof."

That is to say—God can never make a revelation of his will to man. For such a revelation must of necessity be accompanied by some evidence of its superhuman origin, which would be a miracle. The course of reasoning, by which Mr. Hume was led to the above conclusion is, in substance, as follows:—The credit we give to human testimony is based upon our experience, which also proves that men sometimes testify falsely, but our experience in the laws of nature proves they are constant and uniform. A miracle, therefore, contradicts all experience. False testimony is not contrary to experience, therefore, it is easier to believe the testimony is false

than to believe the miracle it is brought to prove is true.

This argument contains several very unsound statements.

1. It is not true, that our belief in human testimony depends solely upon our experience. Generally, those having the least experience are most ready to receive human testimony, as in the instance of children.

2. It is not true that miracles are contrary to experience. To whose experience does he mean? His own? He is not to decide for all. To the universal experience of mankind? This is his meaning, but how are we to get at this experience? By appealing to history? History says miracles are true.

3. The argument of Mr. Hume begs the question. If he says miracles are contrary to our experience, we admit it, but that proves nothing. That such things have never occurred to us does not prove they never occurred to others. If he says they are contrary to the experience of those among whom they are said to have transpired, we reply, this is the very point to be proved, and we want proof, not assertion.

4. But we would turn Mr. Hume's argument against himself. It is contrary to experience that any book, bearing such a mass of external and internal testimony of truthfulness, as does the Bible, should prove false, therefore it must be true.

Ex. xi. 2.—Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.

1. Upon the face of this infidels have charged the Israelites with being a nation of thieves. It is a sufficient answer to this, to say that, if God commanded them to do this thing, that gave them full right and title to the articles received, for, “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.”

2. But there is no evidence that the Israelites designed to deceive the Egyptians; everything in the narrative goes to show that the people expected to return, and were perfectly honest in thus dealing with their neighbors.

3. The word *borrowed* is rendered *ask* in Psa. ii. 8. In the three passages relative to this transaction (chap. iii. 22, xi. 2, xii. 35), the LXX. has *shall ask*, and it was so in the English Bible till the edition of Becke, in 1549; the Geneva, Barker’s and some others, having *aske*. According to this, the injunction seems to have been that the Israelites should ask a restoration of that property of which they had been wrongfully despoiled. This seems to be intimated also in chap. iii. 22, where the word rendered *spoil* signifies *regain* or *recover*, and is so used in Sam. xxx. 22.

4. Dr. Clarke has ably argued that there could be no *borrowing* in the case, because, if accounts were

fairly balanced, Egypt would be in considerable arrears to Israel, having owed its policy, its opulence, and even its political existence to the Israelites, and for all this the latter received no compensation whatever, but were cruelly abused and obliged to witness, as the sum of their calamities, the murder of their male children.

Ex. xii. 40.—Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was for a hundred and thirty years.

The difference between this text and Gen. xv. 13, is accounted for by considering the different data from which they are computed.

Ex. xiv. 22.—And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

As the passage of the Red Sea, described in this verse and the context, was a miraculous event wrought by Almighty God, no valid objections can be brought against it upon scientific grounds, and all attempts to explain it upon natural principles are uncalled for and without proof. The sacred narrative of the event is corroborated by ancient history and tradition.

Ex. xx. 5.—Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.

Infidels can not relieve themselves of the fact herein expressed, though they object to the text; with or without the Bible, it still remains a fact. In the diseased constitutions, dishonored names and broken fortunes of many around us, we see daily the evidences of its truthfulness.

This entailment of the physical consequences of sin seems to be all that is comprehended in the above threatening. See Eze. xviii., especially the 19 v.—“Yet ye say, Why doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.”

Ex. xxii. 18.—Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.

The objection to this law, as unnecessarily severe, loses sight of the fact, that besides plundering and robbing others, they were, under the Jewish theocracy, guilty of both blasphemy and treason.

Ex. xxiv. 4.—And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord.

There is no contradiction in this to verse 12, where the Lord is said to have written them; it is evident from the context they were written by both.

Ex. xxxiii. 23.—And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

This means that there should be a diminished view of God's glory allowed to Moses.

Ex. xxxii. 3.—And all the people brake off the golden ear-rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

4.—And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf.

Infidels have disputed the truth of this, on the ground that a calf of gold could not be got up in a single day. To this we reply—

1. There is nothing in the narrative which intimates that it was done in one day or two; so these objectors (Collins, Tindall, &c.) were fighting a man of straw of their own make.

2. The text does not say the image was of solid gold; it was, doubtless, only covered with that metal.

The part which Aaron took in this transaction was forced upon him (v. i. 22, 23), and that he met not the punishment due his sin, was owing to his repentance, which is evident in his subsequent conduct.

LEVITICUS.

A GREAT deal of infidel ridicule has been expended upon the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Jewish church, described in this and other sacred books. They have been denounced as silly, senseless, and unworthy the origin ascribed to them. All such objections, however, are founded in ignorance of the circumstances under which these rites originated and the true philosophy of the mind.

In their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the Israelites had seen abundant manifestations of God's goodness and mercy, and to some extent his justice. But God is a holy being, and it was essential to them to know this, yet living, as they had been, in the midst of idolatry, they could have no conception of this attribute. And how could the idea of God's holiness be impressed upon the mind of that nation? As holiness is an abstract idea, and can reach the mind through the senses only, it is very evident, that it must be conveyed to them through the medium of sensible things. Hence it was, that every rite connected with the Jewish order of worship, as divinely instituted, conveyed to them the idea of purity and holiness, and transferred that idea to God. Take, for illustration, the offering of sacrifices.

“In the outset, the animals common to Palestine were divided, by command of Jehovah, into clean and unclean; in this way a distinction was made, and the one class, in comparison with the other, was deemed to be of a purer and better kind. From the class thus distinguished, as more pure than the other, one was selected to offer as a sacrifice. It was not only to be chosen from the clean beasts, but, as an individual, it was to be without spot or blemish. Thus it was, in their eyes, purer than the other class, and purer than other individuals of its own class. This sacrifice the people were not deemed worthy, in their own persons, to offer to Jehovah; but it was to be offered by a class of men who were distinguished from their brethren, purified, and set apart for the service of the priest's office. Thus the idea of purity originated from two sources; the purified priest and the pure animal *purified*, were united in the offering of the sacrifice. But before the sacrifice could be offered, it was washed with clean water—and the priest had, in some cases, to wash himself, and officiate without his sandals. Thus, when one process of comparison after another had attached the idea of superlative purity to the sacrifice—in offering it to Jehovah, in order that the contrast between the purity of God, and the highest degrees of earthly purity might be seen, neither priest, nor people, nor sacrifice, was deemed sufficiently pure to come into his presence; but the offering was made in the court without the holy of holies. In this manner, by a process of comparison,

the character of God, in point of purity, was placed indefinitely above themselves and their sacrifices.

“And not only in the sacrifices, but throughout the whole Levitical economy, the idea of purity pervaded all its ceremonies and observances. The camp was purified—the people were purified—everything was purified and re-purified; and each process of the ordinances was designed to reflect purity upon the others, until, finally, that idea of purity formed in the mind and rendered intense by the convergence of so many rays, was, by comparison, referred to the idea of God—and the idea of God in their minds, being that of an infinitely powerful and good spirit; hence, purity, as a characteristic or attribute of such a nature, would necessarily assume a moral aspect, because it appertained to a moral being—it would become *moral purity or holiness*. Thus they learned, in the sentiment of Scripture, that God was of too *pure* eyes to look upon iniquity.” (Philos. of the Plan of Salva., pp. 75–95.)

In the same way, by the severity of the penalties affixed to the transgression of divine law, was the idea of God’s justice impressed upon and kept before their minds. Thus in their consummate adaptation to the constitution of the mind as then developed, the Jewish ritual and laws bear unmistakeable evidence of their divine origin.

Lev. xxvii. 29.—None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death.

Voltaire relies upon this passage to show that God, according to the Jews, demanded human sacrifices—(Philo. Dict. art. Jephtha.) This, however, is a gross perversion of language. Sacrifices are not named in the text; the phrase *put to death* is not equivalent to *offer as sacrifice*, and can not be so understood. It teaches that those devoted to destruction by the penal *'herem*, or solemn *anathema*, denounced by public or divine authority, could not be redeemed.*

That human sacrifices were abhorrent to God is sufficiently clear from the case of Abraham. When his faith had been tried, his hand was stayed—he was not allowed to offer his son, but another victim was provided. And why? Because such an offering was displeasing to Jehovah.

If further proof on this point were necessary, we might quote Deut. xii. 29–32, where the Israelites are forbidden to do unto the Lord, as the heathens do to their gods, and the offering of human sacrifices are specified as particularly abhorrent to the Divine Being.

* Jahn.

NUMBERS.

Num. xii. 3.—Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.

This has been condemned as a degree of self-praise inconsistent with the measure of meekness claimed. The word rendered *meek* primarily means *oppressed*, and “has the accessory idea of humility, meekness; *i. e.*, the humble, the meek, who prefer to suffer wrong than to do wrong.”* This, under the circumstances, he was justifiable in saying of himself.

Num. xiv. 30.—Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun.

The promise of this land to the generation here addressed was conditional, they, failing on their part of the conditions, forfeited the promise. Caleb and Joshua are particularly excepted, the priests were also excepted, but are not here named, because probably not present on the occasion.

* Gesenius.

Num. xiv. 34.— and ye shall know my breach of promise.

The marginal reading is—*the altering of my purpose*. The promises of God are conditional, though the conditions are not always expressed. The failure to comply with the conditions of a promise, will result in a corresponding failure to receive the promise. “And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then will I repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them” (Jer. xviii. 9–10); that is,—*I will change my purpose—I will not grant the promise*. This is all that is meant by *breach of promise* above. See Eze. xviii. 21, and xxxiii. 11.

Num. xxii. 22.—And God’s anger was kindled because he went.

This is said of Balaam, yet in v. 20, it is said God told him to go. There is no inconsistency between these two passages. Balaam was originally commanded in most peremptory terms not to go; instead of obeying instantly and faithfully he yielded to the temptation offered (v. 17), and persuaded the messengers of Balak to remain all night (v. 19), doubtless, to give the proposition further consideration. In this he sinned, and God gave him up to his own wicked heart, and that his punishment

might be wrought upon him, said, in answer to his solicitations, *go*.

Num. xxv. 9.—And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

There is no discrepancy between this passage and 1 Cor. x. 8, as Paul speaks of those only who “fell in one day,” *viz.*, twenty-three thousand, while the text includes all that died on that occasion, even those who were destroyed by the judges.

“These were butchered,” said Voltaire, “to expiate the fault of one man who was surprised with a Moabitish woman.”

This is a falsehood. The twenty-four thousand were not slain for the sin of one, but perished for their own sins, before he was slain.

Num. xxxi. 15.—And Moses said unto them, have ye saved all the women alive?

16.—Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.

17.—Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women-children, that hath not known

man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.

A few words will suffice to redeem this text from the indecent and blasphemous assertions of infidels. From the narrative given in chap. xxv., some idea may be formed of the extremely depraved and vicious character of the Midianites, and of their efforts to involve Israel in the same obscene and impious system of idolatry which they had adopted. Their arts but too well succeeded, and twenty-four thousand Israelites suffered death for their sins in this matter. In the present chapter the Lord commands Moses to avenge the children of Israel on these heathen. The Israelites are, therefore, to be regarded on this occasion as "the sword of the Lord," and not so much the sword of *war* as the sword of *justice*. The former makes a difference between youth and manhood, between male and female; but the latter makes none, except between *guilt* and *innocence*, or the various degrees of guilt. As to the females specified in the text to be destroyed, they were the *greatest* criminals, and had been more immediately the instruments of polluting Israel with superstition, obscenity and idolatry. Their lives were, therefore, forfeited by their personal transgressions. True, the infants had not sinned, but a moment's reflection will show that it was a merciful provision for both parties; for, had they been preserved, it would have been doubtless in a state of vassalage. Be that as it may, while we know that

the author and supporter of life has a right to dispose of it as he sees fit; and while we know, moreover, that as the "Judge of the earth," he will do right, we need not perplex ourselves to find the *reasons* of his conduct where he has seen fit to withhold them.

It is not true that the young women were preserved for concubinage. The laws of the Jews protected the honor of the captives (Deut. xxi. 10-14), and treated them with benevolence.

See further note on Deut. xx. 17, p. 97.

DEUTERONOMY.

Deut. i. 1.—These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red Sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizanab.

The word rendered *this side*, reads in the original *beyond* Jordan, and it has been argued, with seeming plausibility, that this book must have been written after the Israelites had crossed into Canaan, and consequently, not by Moses. There is reason to believe, however, that the country on the east of Jordan was called *Beyond Jordan*, and was so designated without reference to the position of the speaker. There is an illustration of this in Cæsar's Commentaries. That part of Gaul lying between Rome and the Alps was called Hither Gaul; and that between the Alps and the Atlantic, was Farther Gaul; and so Cæsar denominates them, no matter where he is; if in Farther Gaul, he calls it Farther Gaul, though to him it is actually Hither Gaul. This is very clear from the fact that "this side Jordan," Deut. i. 5, includes the land of Moab. The same occurs 1 Kings iv. 24.

Deut. i. 10.—The Lord your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.

As Moses must have meant the stars visible to the eye, his comparison was very moderate, for the Israelites then exceeded this number many times. Infidels have forced upon the text a construction evidently foreign to it, and then disputed its truth.

Deut. ii. 12.—The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime; but the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the Lord gave unto them.

As Israel had not yet entered into the possession of Canaan, it is evident that the last clause of the text is an interpolation; a note of some scribe, which has crept into the text. These interpolations are very few and easily detected, being in the form of explanation or illustration, and bearing evident marks of a later origin than the pure text. As it is, they constitute no valid objection to the genuineness or authenticity of the books in which they are found.

Deut. xiii. 9.—But thou shalt surely kill him; thy hand shall be first upon him to put

him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people.

This was the penalty of idolatry, and infidels have pronounced it unnecessarily severe, cruel, &c. Severe penalties, however, were a part of the means used by Almighty God, to impress upon the mind of that people a proper notion of his holiness and justice. Moreover, for a Jew to become an idolater was to commit treason, a crime almost, if not universally, punished with death.

Deut. xvii. 17.—Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away.

It has been objected that had this, and other passages in the Pentateuch, recognizing the existence of a king over Israel, existed in time of Samuel he would not have resisted, as he did (1 Sam. viii. 6), the appointment of a king. To this we reply: 1. There is no force in the conclusion, as it assumes the point in debate—it must be *proved* that Samuel would not have objected to a king in the face of this and like laws. There is strong reason to believe he would: see 1 Sam. viii. 11. 2. It is evident Samuel's chief ground of displeasure was the rejection of himself.

The text has been the ground of another objection, viz:—that had this law existed in the times of David and Solomon, they would not have taken to themselves such vast numbers of wives as they did.

This is a formidable objection! A powerful argument!! Quite unanswerable!!! Pity it is, that it has not been proved that neither David nor Solomon would, nor did, violate any known law of God. This is essential to the objection, for without it it is perfectly silly.

Deut. xx. 17.—But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.

Perhaps no objection to the sacred writings has been more popular among infidels than that based upon the command of God, to the Israelites, to destroy these heathen nations. It has been pronounced incomparably cruel and sufficient of itself to invalidate the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Morgan, Tindal, Bolingbroke and Paine, with a host of petty apostles, have rung their changes upon it, as if perfectly unanswerable. No notice has been taken of the wickedness of these nations, their idolatries, barbarous and bloody rites, cruelties in family government, and other shocking forms of vice, but they have been treated in the argument as a helpless, harmless people, cruelly cut off in their innocency.

We reply to this objection, in all its phases, as follows:

1. These nations had so far sunken in depravity as to forfeit their probation. Crimes of the most shocking and disgusting nature filled up the measure of their wickedness. See Deut. ix. 1-6, and Lev. xviii. Perhaps no nations, since known to us, have exhibited such deep moral corruption. And this description of them, by the Scriptures, is fully sustained by all the light that profane history throws upon them. There was then no cruelty in their destruction, but a just visitation of divine indignation.

2. In selecting the Israelites as the instruments of this deserved punishment, God, doubtless, designed to impress their minds with an indelible sense of his abhorrence of sin. This was a leading feature in his providences and laws in reference to that people. In the terrible calamities which overwhelmed the Egyptians, they saw the awful hand of the sin-avenging God; in the smoke which rolled up from every blood-dripping altar, they read that life is the sacrifice for sin; in the severe penalties guarding the divine law, they saw a formidable battery of wrath challenging their obedience, and threatening destruction to him who dared impiously to fling down the gauntlet of defiance to Almighty God.

3. But infidels, much as they object to the *facts* here recorded, must meet the consequences. It is a fact that these nations were destroyed. Upon the most prevalent theories of infidelity, God is the cause of all that happens, hence, the God of infidels

is as justly impeachable as the God of the Bible in this matter.

4. Again—God does now destroy thousands upon thousands by pestilence, earthquakes, and other instrumentalities. To say that these are natural causes does not relieve the case, for they are causes set in operation and directed by him, who “doeth all things according to his will,” and doeth all things right.

Deut. x. 6.—And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakin to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried.

In Numbers, it is said Aaron died at Mount Hor; Mosera was the name of the district in which Hor is situated. Moreover, the word *there* (*scham*) may be here used to designate the time of Aaron's death, and be translated *then*, or *at that time*, as it is in several other passages.

Deut. xxi. 18–21.—The treatment of the rebellious son.

Parental power in ancient times extended even over the lives of the children. Moses here circumscribes this power, and orders that no son be put to death until proved before the magistrates of the city guilty of the crimes above specified. This law then, so far from being cruel, as infidels have asserted, was

designed to prevent a cruel and arbitrary exercise of power already possessed.

Deut. xxvii. 4.—Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in Mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. * * * * *

8.—And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law, very plainly.

An infidel work, now before me, denies that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, because “there were only two modes of writing known” at that time; one by cutting words on stone, the other by tracing them on plaster; neither of which he could have used for the whole five books.

1. We may set against this the assertion of other infidels, that manuscripts among Egyptians, Chinese, and Hindoos, antedate this period thousands of years, and go back even centuries before the time of Adam. This is certainly placing the origin of writing at a very early date.

2. The truth is in neither of these extremes. The precise date this art originated is now unknown. It is clear the Egyptians practised it before the time of Moses, and it was known to the Greeks at least as early as the Mosaic age. Cadmus, according to traditional history, carried the alphabet into Greece from Phœnicia, in 1821, B. C.: the Hebrews were

once neighbors of the Phœnicians, and may have acquired the knowledge of letters from them. These facts constitute a sufficient answer to the objection.

Deut. xxxiv.—Death of Moses.

This account of the death affixed to the Pentateuch has been made a fruitful source of cavil by infidel writers.

There is reason to believe that this passage originally formed an introduction to the book of Joshua, and became separated from it by the division of the books into chapters and verses, or at some earlier period.

JOSHUA.

Jos. v. 5.—Now all the people that came out were circumcised; but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.

It has been said that the omission of circumcision in the wilderness is not consistent with the authority of the law, and, therefore, the law could not have been in existence. This omission did not extend through the whole journey, but only from the time when the exclusion of the existing generation from Canaan was declared, and it is easily accounted for by the wickedness of the Jews.

Jos. x. 13.—And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.

This language, though not philosophically correct, is in strict accordance with popular usage. The sun always stands still; yet the man who would say Philadelphia set last night, at 5.22, P. M., and rose this morning, at 6.11, A. M. however correct he

might be, would be regarded as a pedantic fool. The sacred narrative describes the phenomenon just as it appeared; the sun and moon appeared to stand still—the day appeared to be thus prolonged, and this manner of expression satisfies all the demands of truth. The event being miraculous, can not be objected to on scientific grounds.

Jos. x. 23.—And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.

There is no discrepancy between the account of the death of this king of Hebron, given in v. 26, and that in v. 37: two different individuals are spoken of; yet some infidels have not had sense enough to see this, or honesty enough to acknowledge it.

Jos. xi. 19.—There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle.

The last clause of this text is said to be contradicted by chap. xv. 63: but Jerusalem was in the possession of the Israelites, though the Jebusites, there spoken of, remained fortified in a small portion of the city—the *city* was taken, but the fort or castle remained in their possession.

JUDGES.

Jud. i. 19.—And the Lord was with Judah ; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain ; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.

The pronoun *he* of the text stands for Judah. He drove out the inhabitants of the mountain because the Lord was with him, but it does not follow that the Lord was with him when he attempted to drive out the inhabitants of the valleys. Here, left to himself, he fails.

Jud. ix. 13.—And the vine said unto them, should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man.

The word *God* should be *gods*, *i. e.*, the hero-gods of the heathen ; Jotham is speaking of an idolatrous city, and the language is figurative.

Jud. xi. 30, 31.—Jephthah's vow.

This has been made the subject of much infidel animadversion. But why should God, or his word,

be held responsible for the rash vow of an individual? Human sacrifices were positively forbidden. (See note on Lev. xxvii. 29, page 88;) consequently, if he offered his daughter as a burnt-offering, it was in violation of God's law, and without his approval—nay, with his displeasure.

But it is not true that he so offered his daughter. The word *it*, in the vow (offer *it* up), does not belong to the original; that reads—"shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer a burnt-offering." This view is corroborated by the last verse of the chapter, which, literally translated,* reads—"the daughters of Israel went up from year to year to talk with the daughter of Jephthah," &c. He consecrated her to God in perpetual virginity (v. 39), the greatest sacrifice a Jew could make with an only child.

I SAMUEL.

1 Sam. vi. 19.—And he smote of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand three score and ten men.

The immense number here said to be slain for this offence, has been made matter of severe comment among infidel writers. But the justice of the punishment is not to be determined by the number punished; where it is just to punish one for an offence, it is just to punish any number who may be guilty of it. God is the absolute proprietor of life, and has the right to fix its limits as he wills; and he, alone, can determine what penalties are best fitted to impress with reverence and secure the obedience of his creatures.

As the original reads—"seventy men, fifty thousand men," which does not make sense, many learned critics think a letter used as a particle has been lost from the text, and that it should be translated—"he smote of the people seventy men out of fifty thousand."

1 Sam. xiii. 14.—But now thy kingdom
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shall not continue : the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart.

The prophet, in this language, makes no reference to David's moral character, but means that he is the instrument, or person chosen for the accomplishment of certain purposes. See Acts xiii. 22.

1 Sam. xxviii. 7-25.—Saul and the witch of Endor.

There is in the appearance of Samuel's spirit, on this occasion, no evidence of chicanery or satanic influence. The woman was as much surprised and alarmed as Saul. The prophetic denunciations of Samuel, which afterwards came to pass, were such as neither human wisdom nor diabolical power could foresee, and prove beyond doubt, that it was "the Lord's doings," and it was marvelous in our eyes.

2 SAMUEL.

2 Sam. i. 1-10.—The death of Saul.

The account of Saul's death, here given, contradicts that in the preceding chapter, but then it is the story of a runaway Amalekite, told for the purpose of gaining David's favor, consequently, no dependence is to be placed upon it, and the Bible is not responsible for its untruth, because it exposes its falsity.

2 Sam. xii. 30.—And he took their king's crown from off his head (the weight whereof was a talent of gold with the precious stones), and it was set on David's head.

According to the usual interpretation the weight of this crown would be nearly one hundred and fourteen pounds, which, it is obvious, could not be borne by any human head. We are far from being certain of the absolute meaning of the Hebrew words, translated a *talent of gold*; and while the term is involved in so much uncertainty, no objection can be urged against the narrative on the ground of its supposed incredibility.

2 Sam. xii. 31.—And he brought forth the
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people that were therein, and put them under saws and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln.

David has been not unfrequently reproached for the cruelty he inflicted upon the Amorites on this occasion, which, it is said, was incompatible to the character elsewhere given of him—"a man after God's own heart,"—an expression never properly understood by the modern assailants of this man. In the present instance, however, the cruelty of David is only in our translation, or rather in the sense ascribed to *under* and *through* in the text. An able critic has translated the passage thus:—"He brought forth the inhabitants, and put them to the saw, and to iron mines and iron axes, and transported them to the brick-kiln." This seems to represent fully the sense of the original. But to this it has been objected, that in the parallel passage 1 Chron. xx. 3, it is expressly said that "he cut them with saws," &c.; in reply we would say the word *them*, in this last text, does not belong to it, but was inserted by the translators, and is placed in italics. There is nothing, therefore, in this passage which conflicts with the view we have given of the text.

2 Sam. xxiv. 1.—And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he

moved David against them to say, go, number Israel and Judah.

This passage presents an apparent contradiction to 1 Chron. xxi. 1, in which *Satan* is said to provoke David to number Israel. The question is, who did *move* or provoke David to this act?

Without speculating on the peculiar feature in this act of David, which constitutes its guilt, it was evidently a crime of no small magnitude. The remonstrance of Joab is proof of this. The character of this man, as developed in the sacred history, warrants the belief that under the bidding of the king, he would have stopped at no ordinary crime, yet he here remonstrates strongly against the numbering the people. The act, therefore, must have involved something very criminal.

Again, the punishment inflicted upon the people compels us to take this view of the subject. God would not have laid his hand so heavily upon Israel save to punish some deep, dark transgression. Hence, he could not have been the author or instigator of the act. If it involved moral obliquity (as unquestionably it did), he did not move David to do it. For this reason, if there existed no other, we should be compelled to regard the above rendering of the text as faulty.

But eminent critics, for philological reasons, which we can not give here, render the second clause of the text—"for he moved David," &c.; the pronoun *he* being used impersonally, and not in the place of

the noun Lord. The noun for which *he* stands is that supplied by the writer of Chronicles, namely, *Satan*. This understanding of the text is strictly consistent with correct exegetical principles, and throws light upon the cause of God's anger.

Other biblical scholars propose to throw the clause into the passive form, thus—"for David was moved against them by saying," &c., which obviates the difficulties of the text. Nor do we know any valid objection to such a construction. Therefore, before it can be said that the above passages of Scripture present a contradiction, it must be shown that neither of these solutions is suited to the demands of the case, which, we premise, will be a most difficult task, seeing they both have the authority of great names in biblical literature.

1 KINGS.

1 Kings ii. 6.—Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.

This is the direction which David, on his death-bed, gave to Solomon respecting the punishment of Joab, who had been guilty of a brutal murder, and was then in open rebellion against the kingdom. David does not specify the manner in which he should be punished, but leaves this to the wisdom of Solomon, saying only that he should not be suffered to go to his grave unpunished.

1 Kings ii. 8.—And behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.

9.—Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what

thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

A misunderstanding of this passage has led to the opinion that David commanded Solomon to kill Shimei, for a crime that he had once sworn not to punish by death. Thus an injury has been done this illustrious character by not duly observing—what is common in the Hebrew language—the omission of the negative in a second part of the sentence (and considering it repeated), which is expressed in the first and followed by the connecting particle. In Psa. lxxv. 5, we read, “Lift not up your horn on high: speak *not* with a stiff neck.” The second not, in this text, is inserted by our translators because it is understood, though not repeated in the original. This is further confirmed by Psa. i. 5, and xxxviii 1. Apply this rule to the passage above, and it will read—“Behold thou hast,” &c., and “but bring *not* his hoar head,” &c.

That this is the meaning of the passage is very evident from the context. Solomon did not then kill Shimei; nor did he hold him guiltless, but put him on parol, and slew him only when he violated his oath, and for that reason.

1 Kings xii. 26–29.—The golden calves of Jeroboam.

De Wette, Paulus, Gesenius, and others, have argued that if the Pentateuch had been in existence

at this time, Jeroboam would never have ventured to set up these calves for worship, or the people would not have submitted to it, if he had.

“Reasoning *à priori*, this argument has considerable plausibility, provided attention be not paid to the nature of the human mind, and the facts of history. But on examining it more closely, it loses all force. The history of all religions shows, that in their sacred records, no commandment or prohibition has existed, however clear and distinct, which a wrong bias has not attempted, by all the arts which a mind averse from truth has at command, to free itself from without impugning the authority of the original record. By such argumentation as the above, how plainly it could be shown that the Scriptures were not in existence in the sixteenth century, or, in short, that they never existed. To take only one out of numerous examples. What a plausible proof of the non-existence of the New Testament might be drawn from the present practice of divorces, and the marriages of the divorced by the ministers of the church? The expressions relating to this subject, in the New Testament, are quite as decided and clear as the expressions in the Pentateuch, which Jeroboam explained away.”*

1 Kings xiii. 1-24.—The man of God at Bethel.

This man of God was sent to prophecy against

* Hengstenberg.

the altar at Bethel, and forbidden to stop in the place, or to return by the way he went, yet allowed himself to be persuaded to tarry by a pretended prophet, and consequently lost his life. "If this man of God," says an infidel work before me, "could be so deceived, how can we distinguish between a true prophet and a false one?"

If this man had done precisely as he was told to do, he would have passed out in safety. The command of God to him was clear and positive, and he had no right to set up against this the pretensions of any one. His disobedience was the cause of his death. The whole incident teaches us to trust in God's word above everything else.

1 Kings iv. 26.—And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots.

In 2 Chron. ix. 25, we read of but *four* thousand stalls for horses and chariots. Whence occasion has been taken to affirm a contradiction between the passages. A careful inspection of the texts, however, will show that the author of Kings speaks of *horses*; and the author of Chron. of the *stalls* or *stables* in which they were kept.

1 Kings xxii. 1-27.—The interview between Micaiah and Ahab.

The deception practised upon Ahab, resulting in his death, has been strongly animadverted upon by infidels, who have not scrupled to charge the whole

upon the Lord. The facts in the case were as follows:

1. Ahab was a very wicked man, and had made himself obnoxious to God's judgments, and worthy of death.

2. He had determined to trust in his own prophets and to hear nothing from the prophet of the Lord, whom he hated (v. 8).

3. Micaiah relates a vision (v. 17), representing Israel as scattered like sheep. This displeases Ahab greatly, for he does not want the truth.

4. Micaiah relates another vision (v. 19-22); the dialogue narrated in this passage never actually occurred. It is a vision simply, and is so given by the prophet.

5. The meaning of v. 23, is, that as Ahab was determined not to have the truth, but wanted to be flattered by his prophets, God "sent *him* strong delusion that he might believe a lie and be damned."

2 KINGS.

2 Kings ii. 23, 24.—And as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head, &c.

The prophet Elisha has been reproached in no very measured terms for cursing these *little children*. But the word so rendered in the text, signifies *young men*; these not only insulted Elisha, but also derided his prophetic character. *He cursed them in the name of the Lord*, that is under divine influence—by divine authority—he was the medium through whom God expressed his displeasure.

To what extent the bears injured them is not said; “*they tare*,” or wounded forty-two of them.

2 Kings v. 18.—In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down

myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.

“But when Naaman, the idolator, asked Elisha to permit him to follow his king into the temple of Rimmon, and to worship with him there, did not the same Elisha, who had caused the children to be devoured by bears, answer him, go in peace?”—*Voltaire*.

Naaman, at this time, was not an idolater (v. 17). He does not ask permission to worship with the king (v. 18). He wishes to know whether he may now perform certain services for his master in the temple.

2 Kings vi. 25.—And there was a great famine in Samaria: and behold they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for four-score pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver.

The ass was an unclean animal whose flesh was prohibited by law, this text is, therefore, difficult to understand, unless we suppose the straitness of the siege compelled them to eat unclean beasts.

Some think the words rendered *ass's head*, mean a pile of bread, or other food. Dove's dung is a kind of vetches or pulse, called by the Arabs *pigeon's dung*.

2 Kings xv. 33.—Five and twenty years old

was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.

It was sometimes the case in Israel and Judah, that father and son reigned together, in which cases the length of the reign was often computed from different dates, as the reign of a son from its commencement, when his father was on the throne, or from the death of the father, when the son began to reign alone. This has occasioned some apparent discrepancies. In the above text Jotham is said to have reigned sixteen years; in the thirtieth verse, the "twentieth year of his reign" is mentioned, which is explained by the fact that he reigned some years with his father.

2 Kings xx. 11.—And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

It is not necessary for the understanding of this text, to suppose that either the sun or the earth changed its course ten degrees or even one degree. The intervention of a light mass of vapor between the dial and the sun, would have refracted his beams sufficient to bring back the shadow of the style ten degrees, measuring perhaps ten minutes, or even less.

2 Kings xxiv. 11.—And Nebuchadnezzar,

king of Babylon, came against the city, and his servants did besiege it.

Jerusalem was taken by the king of Babylon three times. 2 Chron. 36. First, in the reign of Jehoiakim; second, in the reign of his son, Jehoiachin; and third, in the reign of Zedekiah. By confusing these several transactions, infidels have made difficulties which do not belong to the book, and then charged upon the writer of it, either ignorance, or a want of veracity.

1 CHRONICLES.

1 Chron. xxi. 25.—So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight.

In 2 Sam. xxiv. 16, 24 verses, it is said David bought the threshing-floor and oxen for fifty shekels of silver of Araunah. There is no real discrepancy here. In Samuel, the purchase of the threshing-floor and oxen only is mentioned, but in the text these, together with the instruments of threshing, the wheat, and the place where the threshing-floor stood, are included. See v. 22, &c.

2 CHRONICLES.

2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.—And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah, the priest, found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses.

Infidels have made great use of this passage, disputing thereupon the genuineness of the Pentateuch, but only by perverting most grossly the facts in relation to it. There is no evidence that more than one book of Moses was lost, or rather *missed* or *overlooked*, as the narrative indicates. There is no proof that it was lost for any considerable time. But, admitting that it was the whole five books of Moses, and these were lost or overlooked in the temple for seventy-five or eighty years, the greatest length of time that can be supposed, for they were in use in the reign of Hezekiah, yet all this would not invalidate the genuineness or the authenticity of the copy found.

Infidels have not scrupled to assert that Hilkiah forged the book he professed to find, but as this has not a shadow of evidence in sacred or profane history to support it, it is a falsehood.

It would appear from all that is recorded of this
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incident, that the original autograph copy of the Pentateuch by Moses, was found by Hilkiah, and it was this fact, as well as its contents, which produced the excitement described.

PROVERBS.

Prov. xxi. 3.—To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. (See p. 130.)

Prov. xxvi. 4, 5.—Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

The Syriac version, instead of the above reading of the fifth verse, reads—Answer a fool according to thine own wisdom, &c. The ancient Hebrew copy of the Chaldee paraphrase, had the same reading. Dr. Kennicott accounts for the alteration, as follows: “And, as the present Hebrew MSS. afford proof that a word has sometimes been taken in carelessly from the line above; so the last word of the first hemistich in the second verse, is here taken in, improperly, from the end of the first hemistich immediately over it, where the same words, preceding and following, might the more easily mislead the eye of the transcriber.”

SONGS OF SOLOMON.

MUCH objection has been made to this book by infidels. It is highly figurative in style, and this is one proof of its oriental and ancient origin. That it is unchaste or immoral, only a gross and impure mind could assert.



ECCLESIASTES.

ONE of the leading propositions of this book is:—that on the supposition of there being no future state, to which this is a preliminary, the whole of human life is vanity, and the creation of the world and of man a failure; and in establishing and illustrating this proposition the writer often avails himself of the position of the infidel, and employs the *argumentum ex absurdo*, with overwhelming effect. So that whatever infidels here find in sympathy with their views is at the same time fully and fairly answered.

ISAIAH.

Isa. vii. 14.—Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The application of this text to Christ has been disputed, because of its intimate connection with another prophecy, which had its fulfilment in the days of the prophet. These two prophecies can, however, be distinguished by attention to the circumstances of the case. Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, joined to subdue Judah and place Tibcah on the throne of David, (vrs. 1, 2, 5, 6.) The prophet was commanded to take his own child (v. 3), go to a certain place, and there declare that this confederacy should fail, and in connection therewith he gave two signs—one, that Immanuel should be born of a virgin, which was but renewing the promise of a Messiah to the Jews,—the second, that before this child, not the virgin's, but his own, should come to maturity, Syria and Israel should be forsaken of their kings, which came to pass.

Isa. xx. 3.—And the Lord said, Like as my
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servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot these years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia.

“Men saw Isaiah walking stark naked in Jerusalem, in order to show that the king of Assyria would bring a crowd of captives out of Egypt and Ethiopia, who would not have anything to cover their nakedness.”—*Voltaire*.

This is a falsehood.

The prophet was told (v. 2), to throw off his sackcloth and shoes, and this was all that was meant by the word naked; just as now, in common parlance, we speak of a person as *not dressed* when the toilet is not arranged. The 4th v. speaks of the condition of the captives, not of Isaiah.

Isa. xlv. 7.—I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.

The Lord sends wars, pestilence, calamities and other evils, as punishments for national sins; it is in this, and not the sense of an originator of moral evil, that he is said to *create evil*.

JEREMIAH.

Jer. xxxviii. 27.—Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him: and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded.

Jeremiah has been accused of duplicity, because he refused to tell the princes all that transpired between him and the king; but he was under no obligation to tell them all; he had promised the king not to do so, and what he did tell them was strictly true. Chap. xxxvii. 20.

EZEKIEL.

Eze. xiv. 9.—And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, &c.

This is spoken of the wicked and false prophets, and means that God will defeat and disappoint their predictions. The Lord, in the context, calls his people to repentance, and warns them against trusting in these false prophets, who prophesied good of them in their sins, for they should be “deceived” if they trusted to prosper in wickedness. This is all that is meant by deceiving the prophet as above.

DANIEL.

Dan. i. 1.—In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

In Jer. xxv. 1, the *fourth* year of Jehoiakim is made to correspond with the *first* year of Nebuchadnezzar, which is supposed to be contradictory to the text above.

1. As the text was written after Nebuchadnezzar came to the throne, it was not improper to speak of him as the king even in events occurring while he was general only, just as we would say President Pierce was in the Mexican war.

2. Heirs to the kingdoms are often called kings in ancient writings, by way of anticipation. In Dan. ii. 1, it is said that “in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar” he “dreamed dreams,” yet this must have been three or four years after the event named in the text. Other illustrations of this are to be found in the sacred books.

3. If the first year of Nebuchadnezzar commenced toward the middle or close of Jehoiakim’s third year, it would correspond also with his fourth, according to Jeremiah.

HOSEA.

Hosea vi. 6.—For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice. Also, Psa. xl. 6 ; Prov. xxi. 3.

These texts have been used by an English infidel writer, to show that God did not command sacrifices, or else has contradicted himself. This manifests great ignorance or perverse obstinacy. The context of these passages proves that it was the character of the sacrifices, and the manner in which they were offered, that called forth such language, and not the offering of sacrifices in itself.

JONAH.

Jonah i. 17.—Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

ii. 10.—And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah on the dry land.

The book of Jonah has been treated with a great deal of irreverence and ridicule, by shallow, self-conceited infidels, on account of the incident narrated above. But the event is miraculous, and can be denied upon three grounds only:—1. That God could not do such a thing—2. That he would not do it, or—3. There is not sufficient evidence to believe he did do it. Upon the first ground the question relates simply to God's power, and will not admit of dispute. Upon the second we remark, that the preservation and punishment of a disobedient prophet—the attestation of his claims as a divine messenger, and the warning of a wicked people, numbering nearly a million, certainly gave occasion for miraculous interposition. Upon the third ground we observe, that the evidence of the book of Jonah involves the evidences of the whole canon; these evidences

have never been invalidated, and are irrefutable. The name of Jonah has also been discovered upon ruins, in the recent excavations at Nineveh, by Layard.

Müller relates an incident which took place in the Mediterranean, in 1758. A sailor fell overboard from a frigate, and was immediately received into the jaws of an immense sea-dog or *carcharis*; before the fish sank he was shot, and compelled to disgorge his prey, who was uninjured, and lived many years afterwards. Such a fish was, no doubt, employed in the case of Jonah, and the incident shows that the miracle was not so stupendous as to be utterly incredible. The prophet was under the care and preserved by the power of God, unto whom all things are possible.*

* See Biblio. Sacra, Jan. 1854.

Objections based upon the New Testament.

MATTHEW.

Matt. i. 1.—The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

For reasons already stated, p. 7, we naturally expect to find differences in the accounts which the several Evangelists give of the life and labors of Christ. In attempting to harmonize these accounts serious difficulties present themselves. Many of these arise from the want of chronological order in the statement of facts. The Evangelists have not regarded the succession of time in the events which they have narrated. They begin with his birth and end with his death, and subsequent ascension to heaven, giving the most important of his sayings and doings, but nowhere is there discovered a design to preserve a fixed chronological order in the facts related.

Another difficulty in harmonizing the Gospels is

found in the different genealogies of Christ, given by Matthew and Luke. It can hardly be conceived possible to construct such a genealogical table, descending from generation to generation in unbroken succession, in a family often dwelling in deep obscurity, and whose history comprised a period of several thousands of years. The most celebrated families of modern times would find it impossible to trace their genealogy through a thousand years in an unbroken line.* But the expectation of the Messiah, through Abraham and David, led the Jews to pay minute attention to their genealogical tables, and enabled them to trace the ancestral line of Christ through all the divisions and subdivisions of the tribes. The differences in these two tables of Matthew and Luke are easily accounted for, and happily may be satisfactorily reconciled.

The genealogy of Mary, as well as that of Joseph, is given, fixing, beyond dispute, the descent of Christ from David: the descent by Mary has a real significance, that by Joseph an ostensible one, he appearing before the world as the reputed father of Christ.

“Both tables, at first view, purport to give the lineage of our Lord through Joseph. But Joseph can not have been the son by natural descent of both Jacob and Heli (Eli), Matt. 1, 16: Luke 3, 23. Only one of the tables, therefore, can give his true lineage by generation. This is done, apparently, in that of Matthew; because, beginning at Abraham,

* Olshausen on Matt. i. 1.

it proceeds by natural descent, as we know from history, until after the exile, and then continues on in the same mode of expression until Joseph. Here the phrase is changed, and it is no longer Joseph who "begat" Jesus, but Joseph, the "husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."* Joseph was legally related to Eli by marriage. See note on Luke iii. 23.

Matthew begins the lineage with Abraham, and thus shows Christ's relation to the Jews, but Luke ascends to Adam and thereby connects the Redeemer with all mankind.

After David, Matthew carries the line down through Solomon, but Luke takes it through Nathan, another son of David.

It happened sometimes that names were left out of the Jewish genealogical tables, because of impiety, and for other reasons. An illustration will be seen by comparing Ezra vii. 1-5, with 1 Chron. vi. 3-15; where six generations are left out of one record. These omissions did not impair the record, as the lineage was still made apparent. Such omissions, for reasons not given, occur in the table of Matthew.

The application of the same names to different persons is a source of difficulty here as elsewhere. A little attention will show that the Salathiel and Zorobabel of Matthew are not the same persons bearing those names in the table of Luke, yet the

* Dr. Robinson's Harmony, 171.

want of such attention has produced much confusion.

The words, *the son of*, running through Luke's table, were added by the translators for the sake of the connection, and are not always literally true.

The three divisions (Matt. i. 17), are reckoned by counting David as the last of the first, and the first of the second, and Jechoniah as the first of the third division.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE*

EXHIBITING THE THREE DIVISIONS OF MATTHEW.

1. Abraham,	1. David,	1. Jechoniah,
2. Isaac,	2. Solomon,	2. Salathiel,
3. Jacob,	3. Roboam,	3. Zorobabel,
4. Judah,	4. Abiah,	4. Abiud,
5. Phares,	5. Asa,	5. Eliakim,
6. Esrom,	6. Josaphat,	6. Azor,
7. Aram,	7. Joram,	7. Sadoc,
8. Aminadab,	8. Uzziah, (Ozias),	8. Achim,
9. Naason,	9. Jotham,	9. Eliud.
10. Salmon,	10. Ahaz,	10. Eleazer,
11. Boaz,	11. Hezekiah,	11. Matthan,
12. Obed,	12. Manasseh,	12. Jacob,
13. Jesse,	13. Amon,	13. Joseph,
14. David.	14. Josiah.	14. Jesus.

In some ancient MSS. the name of Jehoiakim is inserted between Josiah and Jechoniah, in which case the second series begins with Solomon instead of David as above, though the repetition of David does, at least, appear to be called for by the text, Matt. i. 17. See Strong's Harmony of the Gospels.

* From Dr. Robinson's Harmony.

Matt. ii. 16.—Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he diligently inquired of the wise men.

In the coasts thereof, means the surrounding country near the town. This massacre has been doubted because no historian makes mention of it. This silence is easily accounted for. The number of children slain must have been small (Bethlehem being but a little country town), and the massacre itself, compared with the many horrible deeds of Herod, became a small affair.

Matt. ii. 23.—And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene.

The word *prophets*, in the plural form, shows that Matthew had no particular passage in view, but used the term *Nazarene* in the then common sense, as meaning one *low, despised*. Psal. xxii., and Isa. liii. are sufficient to prove the correctness of the text.

Matt. iii. 4.—And the same John had his

raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

A species of the grasshopper or locust, very common in the east, is still used there as an article of food, being dried, ground, and made up into bread.

Matt. iv. 8.—Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

This temptation of Christ, by Satan, was in perfect accordance with the prevailing opinion of the Jews, that the Messiah should have universal dominion. But the text does not mean (as infidels have charged upon it), that all the kingdoms of earth could be seen from any mountain in Judea or elsewhere. *To show* means to exhibit, or make appear in any way.

Matt. x. 34.—Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I am come not to send peace, but a sword.

Strife is not the *object* of Christ's advent; its real object is the peace in which the strife above intimated terminates. Nevertheless, strife is the *result* of Christ's entrance into the heart; it, too often, brings upon a man the enmity of "his own house-

hold." "The results of Messiah's appearance among men depend upon their own spiritual dispositions: salvation for the believer, destruction for the unbeliever. Around his banner the hosts of the faithful gather; but infidels reject and fight against it."*

Matt. xi. 3.—And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

This is the inquiry John sent to make of Christ, and it is claimed to be inconsistent with his former acknowledgment of Christ. But John was now in prison and not able to identify him of whom he hears so much, as the "Shiloh." Moreover, the seeming delay in the manifestation of Christ as the Messiah in great glory (as was expected), as well as a commendable caution, may have been the reason of his anxiety to hear from him personally.

Matt. xiii. 34.—All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them.

So far from meaning that Jesus spoke dark and incomprehensible things only, the text teaches that he presented and illustrated religious truths through the medium of earthly things—through the familiar concerns of everyday life. "We may define the

* Neander's *Life of Christ*, p. 24.

parables as representations through which the truths pertaining to the kingdom of God are vividly exhibited by means of special relations of common life, taken either from nature or the world of mankind."* This is all that is meant by parables in the text.

Matt. xiii. 58.—And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

Their unbelief was not the cause of any inability on the part of Christ, but they had obstinately rejected his doctrines, to establish which his miracles were performed, consequently, miracles were no longer necessary or useful.

Matt. xv. 26.—But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.

Our Lord meant no disrespect in this language to the Canaanitish woman. He used a figurative expression, current at the time, in order to try her faith.

Matt. xv. 39.—And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

In Mark viii. 10, it is said, he "came into the

* Neander's Life of Christ, p. 107.

parts of Dalmanutha." These places were near each other on the west side of the sea of Galilee, so that he could be "on the coasts" of one and "into parts" of the other at one time.

Matt. xxi. 1, 2.—And when they were nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, and unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.

Our Lord did not here appropriate to his own use that to which he had no right; there seems to have been a previous agreement between himself and the owners of the animals for the use of them; be this as it may, the owners gave their consent to the transaction. Mark xi. 6.

Matt. xxi. 19.—And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.

In blasting this fig-tree there was no trespass upon private property, for it grew on the public road—the highway. Neither is there any conflict

between this account of the event and that given by Mark. Matthew's is an abbreviated, or condensed, and Mark's a more detailed account, so that some points are mentioned in the latter which are omitted in the former; but nothing in the one contradicts the other.

One design of this act of the Lord was no doubt to exhibit the character and destiny of the Jewish nation. Like this tree they were fruitless, and consequently doomed to the wrath of God.

Matt. xxiii. 35.—That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

In this language our Lord announces, that the long continued transgressions of the Jewish people are about to receive their merited retribution. God did not send prophets to be scourged and killed, that the Jews might be punished for it. It is the consequence of their rejection, and not the design of their being sent, that is here expressed.

This Zacharias can not be the one whose death is mentioned in 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21, as his father was Jehoida (though it was common in those days for persons to bear more than one name), there can be no reasonable doubt that Zechariah, whose book is in the sacred canon, and who was the son of Ba-

rachiah, is the person spoken of, though we have no other account of his death than that given in the text.

Matt. xxvii. 5.—And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Matthew here states that Judas hung himself; Luke says, Acts i. 18, he fell and burst asunder. Both of the accounts are true; it is possible for a man who had hung himself to fall and burst. To sustain a charge of contradiction between these, or any other passages of Scripture, it must be shown that they can not possibly be reconciled, or, at least, that every proposed method of reconciliation is incorrect or fails to accomplish its purpose.

Matt. xxvii. 9.—Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; .

10.—And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

The prophecy here alluded to is not found in any writings of Jeremiah, which have come down to us, though some of the fathers speak of books of his in which it does appear. As the Syriac, and several

other early versions, are without the name of Jeremiah, it is very probable that it was inserted in the text by a copyist, and should be omitted.

In Acts i. 18, it is said, "this man purchased a field with the reward of his iniquity;" by this is meant that his money purchased it, though he was not the active agent in the purchase. The idea is *he gave occasion to purchase*: such a construction is warranted by usage; see Matt. xxvii. 60: "And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed;" where it is not meant that Joseph hewed the tomb out of the rock, but had it done. See also, Rom. xiv. 15: 1 Cor. vii. 16: 1 Tim. iv. 16.

Matt. xxvii. 28.—And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

Mark and John call this a *purple robe*, the difference of a shade or two can make but little matter, though it is very probable the word was used to specify the character more than the color of the robe. It was such a one as was worn by kings, &c.

Matt. xxvii. 44.—The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

Luke speaks of but one thief as railing at Christ. It was common to put the plural for the singular form; though it is probable that both thieves railed

at him ; but one afterwards repented. Luke xxiii. 39, 40.

Matt. xxviii.—The Resurrection of Christ.

Infidels profess to find such differences, discrepancies, and direct contradictions in the several accounts of Christ's resurrection, by the Evangelists, as to destroy entirely their historical verity. If these discrepancies actually existed they would form, indeed, a valid and insuperable objection to the narratives; but if they exist in appearance only, and not in fact, then we claim them as evidence of the historical truth of the Gospels. They will give us "unity in diversity," or "substantial truth under circumstantial variety." The existence of these apparent discrepancies proves, beyond doubt, that there was no collusion—no previous agreement between the historians as to what should be said, and it is not possible that they could have separately and severally imagined a story agreeing so perfectly in all its parts. That differences should exist it is natural to suppose ; such must be the case where several reporters relate the same event, merely in accordance with the several phases of it which they themselves had observed. John tells particularly what came under his own notice, and seems to have depended for the rest mainly upon the testimony of Mary Magdalene. Luke narrates what he learned from "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." Mark, it appears, made up his account from Matthew and

Luke, with additions from those who saw the occurrences stated. Matthew was one of the witnesses and intimate with others. These facts qualify them as historians of the event, but at the same time lead us to expect some differences in their accounts. We can well conceive how one might relate what another passed in silence—how some particulars would make a deeper impression upon one mind than upon others, and thus be brought forward more prominently in one account than in the others. But that with all these differences the accounts should still harmonize perfectly, places beyond doubt the historical truth of the events narrated.

As Mr. Paine has given, in his “Age of Reason,” the sum of infidel objections to this portion of Scripture, we shall depend upon his representation of them.

He says that Matthew “states that when Christ was put in the sepulchre, the Jews applied to Pilate for a watch or guard to be placed over the sepulchre, to prevent the body being stolen by the disciples; but the other books say nothing about this application, nor about the sealing of the stone, nor the guard, nor the watch, and according to these accounts there were none.”

But omissions are not equivalent to denials. No one Evangelist professes to give *all the particulars* of the event, consequently the omissions of one may be supplied by another without invalidating either.

“The book of Matthew continues its account,” says Paine, “that at the end of the Sabbath, as it

began to dawn, towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. Mark says it was sunrising—John says it was dark. Luke says it was Mary Magdalene, and Jōanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women, that came to the sepulchre. And John says it was Mary Magdalene alone.”

A formidable mass of discrepancies, one must confess, but let us examine them more especially. They all agree that it was early in the morning, perhaps they started at twilight (which is all that John means when he says it was dark), and “came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun,” according to Mark.

2. Matthew names the two Marys, but does not give the least intimation they were unattended by others.

3. John does *not* say Mary Magdalene went *alone*, as Paine affirms. He says *she* went, but he does not say whether alone or with others; that is to be gathered from the other Evangelists.

“The book of Matthew goes on to say,” continues Paine, “‘And behold, there was an earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it;’ but the other books say nothing about any earthquake, nor about the angel rolling back the stone and sitting upon it, and according to their accounts there was no angel there.” “Luke says there were two, and they were both standing; and John says there were two, and both sitting.”

1. That Mark, Luke, and John, say nothing of the earthquake, does not invalidate Matthew's statement; their silence should be taken rather as an admission than a denial of the fact.

2. Matthew says an angel rolled away the stone and addressed the women, but does not say there was but one present at the time.

3. Luke and John, in describing the position of the angels, speak of two different times, with an interval of perhaps several hours between them. The former relates the appearance of two angels to all the women, the latter the appearance of two, some time subsequent, to Mary Magdalene alone.

The appearances of Christ, related immediately after the accounts of his resurrection, are not contradictory statements of the same event, as has been asserted, but narratives of separate appearances at different times and places, as seen below. The order of sequence of events is as follows:—Early in the morning, Mary betook herself to the sepulchre in company with the other women. But she hastened in advance of her companions, and to her astonishment found the tomb empty. Immediately she runs in haste to Peter and John. In the meanwhile the other women arrive, see the angels, receive their commands and depart. Then the two disciples come up—John first, outrunning Peter, and Mary close after them. They examine the tomb—Peter going into it, and then return home, leaving Mary there weeping. And now the angel appears to her and next the Lord himself, having already

appeared to the women on their way as they returned. He is afterwards seen by Peter, then towards evening by the two disciples going to Emmaus, by the Apostles (Thomas being absent), as they were assembled in the evening. Mark xvi. 14. Eight days afterwards he appeared to the disciples, Thomas being present, Jno. xx. 24-29; then to seven of the disciples at the sea of Tiberias, Jno. xxi. 1; then to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee, Matt. xxviii. 16, 20; afterwards to over five hundred, 1 Cor. xv. 7; again to James, and finally to the disciples just before the ascension.

MARK.

Mark ii. 26.—How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar, the high priest, and did eat the show-bread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him.

By reference to 1 Sam. xxi. 1, it appears that at the time David ate the show-bread as above stated, Ahimelech was high priest, but his son, Abiathar, was no doubt associated with him in the priesthood; for when Saul massacred Ahimelech's family, Abiathar escaped and followed David, and his party, as their priest. But the text is correct, even if it were true that Abiathar was not then high priest, just as we may correctly say that the Mexican war occurred during the life-time of President Pierce, though he was not then President.

Mark xvi. 17.—And these signs shall follow them that believe, &c.

This passage is to be explained by other parts of Scripture, by which we learn that the miraculous powers here promised to them that believed, were given to the Apostles and their immediate successors for a special purpose, and, this subserved, they were withdrawn.

LUKE.

Luke ii. 2.—And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.

As Cyrenius, or Quirinus, was not governor of Syria until ten years after Christ's birth, this text seems involved in some obscurity. The whole difficulty is in the translation of the word *protos*, rendered *first* in the text. It is sometimes translated, before; Jno. 1, 30, xv. 18; so translated in the passage above, it would read—"And this taxing, or census, was made before Cyrenius was governor of Syria." This view is supported by the fact, that another census was made after he became governor.

Luke iii. 19.—But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done.

This brother is called Herod, in history, but his name was also Philip; the three brothers, sons of Herod the great, were named Herod Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Philip; Herod Agrippa was a grandson of Herod the great.

Luke iii. 23.—And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli.

Joseph was the nearest relative of Heli, Mary's father, therefore espoused her, the only daughter, and took the inheritance by law. Num. xxxvi. 6–9. For this reason he is sometimes called the son of Heli, according to the custom of the Jews. See note on Matt. i. 1–16.

Luke iv. 25.—But I tell you of a truth many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land.

In opposition to what is here said, it has been supposed from 1 Kings xviii. 1, that the drought and famine lasted but three years. This is a mistake easily set right. We must remember the sacred books were originally written without the divisions of chapters and verses. On going back to verse 9, of 1 Kings, chap. xvii., we find the prophet commanded to dwell at Zarephath; after this nothing is said of any communications from God, until verse 1 of the following chapter, where it is said, "And it came to pass, after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year," not of the

drought, there is no such intimation, but as the last time God spoke to him was when he commanded him to go to Zarephath, this must be understood as the third year after that event. The narrative in 1 Kings xviii., does not state the duration of the drought.

Luke xiv. 26.—If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

The objection to this passage arises from the ignorance of the meaning and use of the word *hate*; which, in such connections as the above, bears the sense of *less love*. “If a man have two wives, the one loved and the other hated”—that is, *loved less than the other*. “When the Lord saw that Leah was hated”—that is, as said in the verse preceding, “he loved Rachel more than Leah.” Gen. xxix. 30, 31. See also Matt. x. 37.

Luke xvi. 8.—And the Lord commended the unjust steward.

Not the Lord Jesus, but the lord or master of the unjust steward in the parable. There are a large number of passages in which the term lord is applied to man; the reader should be careful to understand the meaning and application of the term in each passage where it is used.

JOHN .

John i. 18.—No man hath seen God at any time.

The sense of this passage and the context is, that such a revelation could not come from man; men may hear God, but the Son alone can see him. There is no recorded instance of man beholding God; he may have seen *the cloud, the pillar, the fire, the visible symbol* of divine presence, or the angel of the Lord or the Son; but God, the Father, has no man seen.

John i. 35.—And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

These two disciples were Peter and Andrew; the conversation and interview between Christ and them, here narrated, was a short one, the calling of them to the discipleship of Jesus, as stated by Matt. iv. 18, was some time subsequent. Thus the seeming discrepancy between the passages disappears at the touch.

John ii. 1–11.—Turning water into wine.

In reply to the various objections to this passage, we remark:—

1. It is said there were six pots of water, but it is not said that all the water was changed to wine.

2. There are no means of determining how much the pots held; the word rendered firkins (*metretas*), means *measure*, but how large a measure is not now certainly known.

3. The tenth verse does not intimate that any were intoxicated, but rather the contrary. It states simply what was a custom of the times.

4. The *third day* of the first verse means the third day after Jesus came to Galilee. See chap i. 43.

John iv. 2.—(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples).

This verse explains, not contradicts, the preceding one where it is said Jesus baptized; he did not do it himself, that is, personally, but in connection with his disciples, he teaching and they baptizing. See also verse 22, chap. iii.

John v. 4.—For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

Many eminent critics think this incident an interpolation and therefore reject it, but we can not see sufficient reason for such a course. Eusebius testifies to the existence of a medicinal spring in this

place, at his day. The waters were, perhaps, excited by some internal and unknown cause, which led to the belief of angelic agency; or they may have been stirred by a *messenger* or *servant*, which is the meaning of *angel*.

John xi. 4.—When Jesus heard that, he said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Yet Lazarus, of whom this was said, did die; but Jesus knew this, and knew when he died, long before word was sent him from the family. These words must be understood as looking at the final result—the restoration of Lazarus to life. This is clearly indicated in the declaration—“this sickness” (including of course its consequences) “is for the glory of God,” &c.

John xii. 3.—Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus.

There are some differences in the several accounts of this transaction, resulting from the omissions of one being supplied by another. But a little attention will make all plain.

1. It will be seen that neither of the Evangelists states the date of this occurrence. John (xii. 1) tells us when Jesus came to Bethany. Matthew men-

tions (xxvi. 2) what he said to the disciples two days before the feast of passover, but the precise time of the anointing is not named.

2. John does not say in whose house it took place, but this omission is supplied by Matthew and Mark.

3. Matthew does not say what kind of ointment was used, but Mark and John do.

4. Matthew and Mark say it was poured on the head, but omit to mention the feet; John names the feet, but omits the head. Both head and feet were anointed in accordance with the custom of the times.

5. Matthew and Mark do not give the name of the woman, but John supplies this. Thus do all the accounts harmonize.

John xix. 14.—And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king!

In this text Christ is said to be delivered to the Jews at the sixth hour, while Mark says he was crucified about the third hour. The word sixth, in the text, is thought by many eminent critics to be a mistake of some copyist, as a few old MSS., read *third* instead.

Calvin, Grotius, and some others, think the two Evangelists adopted different modes of reckoning time, in one of which the day was divided into twelve hours, beginning at sunrise; in the other it was divided into four parts of three hours each,

which would make the sixth and third coincide. Some think John followed a Romish custom of reckoning the hours from midnight.

The preparation of the passover was not a preparation for the paschal lamb, but for Sabbath services. "Primarily and strictly, this 'preparation' or 'eve' would seem to have commenced not earlier than the ninth hour of the preceding day; as is implied, perhaps, in the decree of Augustus in favor of the Jews, where it is directed that they shall not be held to give pledges on the Sabbath, nor during the preparation before the same after the *ninth* hour; see Jos. Ant. 16, 7, 2. But in process of time the same Hebrew word for 'eve' or 'preparation' came in popular usage to be the distinctive name for the whole day before the Jewish Sabbath, *i. e.*, for the sixth day of the week, or Friday."*

John xix. 34.—But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.

There is very clear proof in this fact, that the *crassamentum* had separated from the *serum* in the ventricles of the heart, which fixes the certainty of Christ's death beyond controversy, and answers at once and forever all the rationalistic theories of the resurrection denying his death.

John xxi. 24.—And there are also many

* Robinson's Harmony, p. 202.

other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

The truth of this has been stoutly denied, and it has been claimed that this, as a falsehood, invalidates John's testimony in all else.

Some suppose the passage to be spurious, and the work of some later hand. We confess we see little force in the reason given for that opinion; besides, the text is found in the earliest copies. The use of hyperbolical language was very common in the east, and can not be greatly objected to. But is this a hyperbole? John begins his gospel by setting forth Christ as "the Word" eternally "with God," and which "was God," "made flesh and dwelt among" us, and is it not literally true that the world could not contain the books which might be written of the works of him who made "all things," without whom "was not anything made that was made," who is "God over all, blessed forever."

ACTS.

Acts i. 12.—Then returned they unto Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet.

We should think, from this passage and context, that the ascension of Christ took place near Mount Olivet; Luke says (xxiv. 50) it was near Bethany; one of the roads between Jerusalem and Bethany lay around and the other over Mount Olivet, which solves the difficulty.

Acts vii. 14.—Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, three-score and fifteen souls.

In Gen. xlv. 27, and Deut. x. 22, the number is fixed at 70. The text, no doubt, includes Joseph's father, his wife, two children and himself, making in all "three-score and fifteen" of the family, which settled in Egypt.

Acts vii. 15.—So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers.

16.—And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.

According to Gen. i. 18, Jacob was buried in Abraham's sepulchre in Hebron, therefore, the word *fathers* must be regarded as the sole subject of *carried* and *laid* in the text; they, and not Jacob, were buried at Sychem or Shechem. Ex. xiii. 19; Jos. xxiv. 19.

But Jacob, and not Abraham, bought the sepulchre at Sychem, consequently, the text is inaccurate. The word Abraham may have been accidentally used for Jacob by some early copyist, or the word *bought* may have been used originally and impersonally, and Abraham placed in the text by a subsequent transcriber to supply a nominative supposed to be wanting. Lightfoot thinks two sepulchres were originally spoken of, and that some small words have been lost from the text.

The existence of such an error, so easily accounted for, does not invalidate the authority of the whole book, by any means; that the severe critical examination to which the Scriptures have been subjected, has discovered and corrected a few verbal mistakes, is presumptive proof that *all* such errors existing in the text have been detected, so there is no occasion for doubt or disputation.

Acts. xxv. 13-18.—The conversion of Paul.

In the several accounts given of this event, in this place, chap. ix. 3-8, and xxii. 6-11, there are these differences,—in one, *all* the attendants *stand*, in another, *all fall*—in one, they *hear not the voice*, but see the light, in another, they *hear the voice*, but

see no person. These discrepancies are easily removed.

Even in the case of an uninspired author, a contradiction is not charged if a plausible method of reconciling two seemingly opposite statements exist; and, certainly, the sacred writers are entitled to the same rule of judgment.

1. They heard the voice, *i. e.*, the tones or sound, according to one account, but did not hear or distinguish, according to another, the words which were addressed to Paul.

2. They may have stood a moment *stupified* and then fell with increasing alarm, or they may have been struck down at first, and afterwards risen to stand in speechless terror. The difficulties, it will be seen, are not in the text, but in the construction which is sometimes put upon it.

There are several facts in connection with this event, which may be properly brought out just here.

1. Paul was a man of extraordinary attainments. The relics of his genius which have come down to us, as well as contemporary history, prove him a man of superior talents. He was also ardently attached to the religion of his fathers, zealously observant of its rites and inveterately prejudiced to Christianity.

2. He was suddenly, thoroughly, and supernaturally changed. It was a sudden change. It was reached by no long or tedious process of thought or feeling. He was thoroughly changed; his intellectual and moral natures participated in that regenera-

tion. The very things he abhorred, from the depths of his soul he now loved and advocated. He became the friend of those whom he before persecuted even to death. He was changed by supernatural causes. This is evident from the narrative, and to go behind the record and suppose something which it neither intimates or allows is meanly illiberal. His own testimony is also to the point. He could not be deceived. He was sufficiently intelligent to judge whether it was an electrical,* or other natural phenomenon, which struck him down on the road to Damascus. He could not have deceived others. He sacrificed his friends, his position in society, his prospects in life, his reputation (the greatest of all sacrifices to a noble mind), and subjected himself to persecutions, toils, "perils," and even death, in attestation of his sincerity. All suspicion of hypocrisy is, therefore, precluded. Moreover, it would be absurdly unphilosophical to say material phenomena are capable of producing moral effects. This change then, in Paul, must have been wrought by supernatural power.

3. That power must have been divine. Evil agencies could not, and would not, if they could, produce such a change. Evil causes produce only evil effects. The sole conclusion is, therefore, irresistibly forced upon us—"this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

* This is Paine's supposition.

ROMANS.

Rom. v. 8.—Christ died for us.

The doctrine of the atonement has met with much objection among infidels. It is alleged that "God would never make the innocent suffer for the guilty," therefore, this doctrine is incompatible with his justice and goodness, and the book which gives it as a revelation from him is monstrously untrue.

1. "There are two ways of meeting this objection. The first is by taking account of the actual and positive credentials which might be alleged on the side of this professed revelation as being a message from God; its miracles, supported by the best and amplest of human testimony; its prophecies, substantiated by the history, both of the anterior writings and their posterior fulfillments; its many discernible signatures of goodness, and sacredness, and truth, as palpably standing forth in the pages of this record; its minute and marvellous consistencies, both with itself and with contemporaneous authors, such as no impostor could ever have maintained; above all, its felt adaptations to the wants, and fears, and longings of the human spirit, and the sense and perception of which are often given in answer to prayer, so as to constitute the evidence to an inquirer of a most

distinct and satisfying revelation to himself.”* These constitute the great bulk and body of Christian evidences, and they are founded on what we observe and can verify of the ways of men, or on what the characteristics of truth and falsehood are in human witnesses, human histories, and human experience. In the face of these evidences the truth of the Bible, and the doctrines it teaches, can not be successfully controverted.

2. We answer this objection in another way. Let it be understood that the Bible does not teach that God made the innocent suffer for the guilty, but that Christ voluntarily took upon himself our nature and “suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”

“‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth,’ not, to be sure, in a speculative, but in a practical sense, ‘that whosoever believeth in him should not perish:’ gave his son in the same way of goodness to the world, as he affords particular persons the friendly assistance of their fellow creatures; when, without it, their temporal ruin would be the certain consequence of their follies: in the same way of goodness, I say, though in a transcendent and infinitely higher degree. And the Son of God ‘loved us, and gave himself for us,’ with a love, which he himself compared to that of human friendship: though, in this case, all comparisons fall infinitely short of the thing intended to be illustrated by them.” “And when,

* Chalmers.

in the daily course of natural providence, it is appointed that innocent people should suffer for the faults of the guilty, this is liable to the very same objection, as the instance we are now considering." It is in this way that Butler shows the analogy of religion to the constitution and course of nature, and this sufficiently answers all objections to the doctrine of the atonement; for an extended view of his argument, we refer to Part II., chap. v., of his incomparable and unanswerable work.

Rom. v. 12.—Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

It is asserted that carnivorous beasts existed in the pre-adamic age; that fossils of that age now found, embracing all grades of animals from the microscopic to the most gigantic, prove that death then reigned; that death, from the beginning, was essential to the existing order of things, that "the mysterious principle of animal life is universally maintained by death."

To all this the text imposes not the slightest objection. It is the death of man only that is spoken of as brought about by sin. "Had his spiritual nature maintained its standing of love and obedience to God—its *natural* state—his physical nature would have continued to enjoy *preternatural* exemption

from the laws of pain and death belonging to the whole animal economy. But having brought himself spiritually into an unnatural state, and so incurred the threatened penalty of spiritual death, he was allowed to fall physically from a state of preternatural exemption down to the pre-existing laws of animal suffering and death.”*

* Harris's Man Primeval.

1 CORINTHIANS.

1 Cor. xv. 5.—And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

It is true there were not twelve disciples present on the occasion referred to, but the word is used, not in a numerical sense, but as designating the body or college of apostles. Some MSS. read *eleven* instead of twelve.

2 CORINTHIANS.

2 Cor. xii. 16.—But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

The word "*but be it so*," and "*nevertheless*," show very clearly that the Apostle is using the language or charge of an accuser, and he admits the accusation for the sake of argument simply. He does not confess the truth of the charge of craftiness, but concedes it so far only as to turn the point against his accuser; a very justifiable use of the *argumentum ad hominem*.

2 TIMOTHY.

2 Tim. iv. 14.—Alexander, the coppersmith, did me much evil : the Lord reward him according to his works.

This is not to be understood in the sense of a curse, which would be a violation of divine law. The best authorities demand the passage to be translated in a declarative sense—"the Lord *will* reward him," &c. Most of the apparent imprecations found in the sacred writings, and given as the language of the writers, are to be understood as predictions of what shall occur to the wicked ; occasionally, however, they spoke in God's name and cursed by his authority.

HEBREWS.

Heb. ix. 3.—And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all.

4.—Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot, that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.

This is said to contradict 1 Kings viii. 9. "There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb."

But these two passages refer to different times; the first to the lifetime of Moses, the second to the time of the dedication of the Temple by Solomon.

Heb. xi. 31.—By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

The word *zonah*, in Hebrew, and *parne*, in Greek, which is here translated *harlot*, should be rendered *innkeeper*. So also in Ja. ii. 25.

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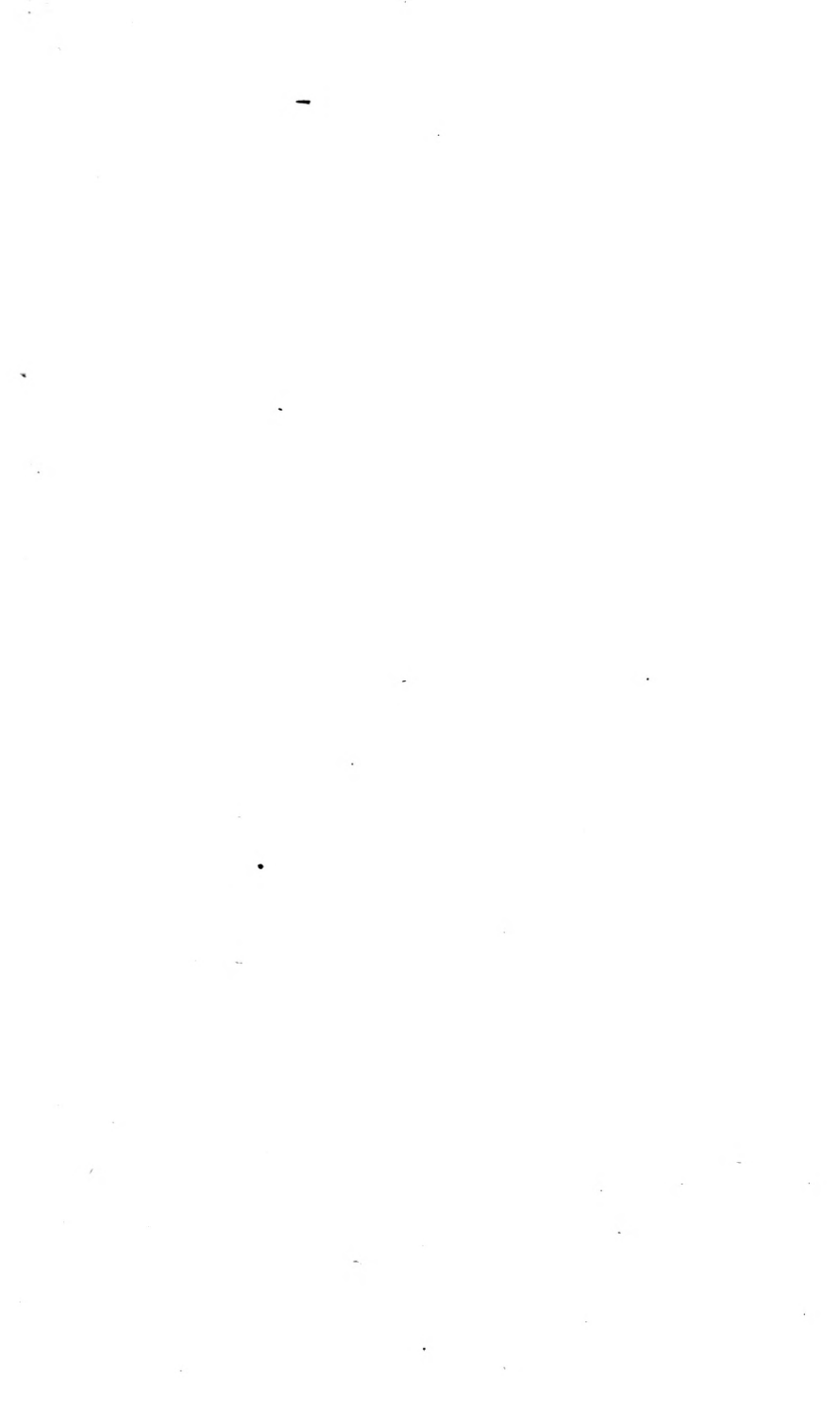
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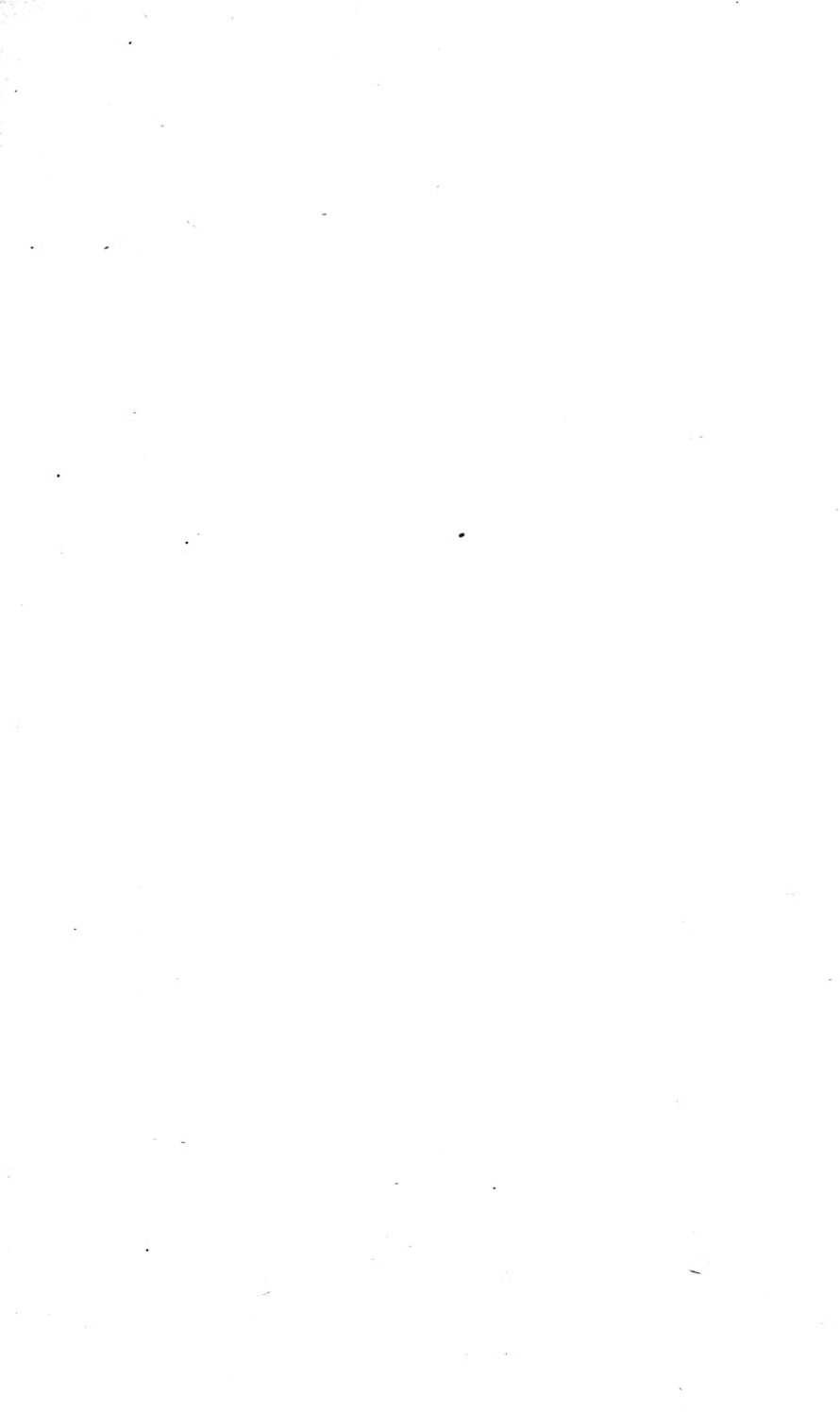
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